Peso sinks to 18-month low at 54.199 to US dollar

Story in Business, PAGE B1

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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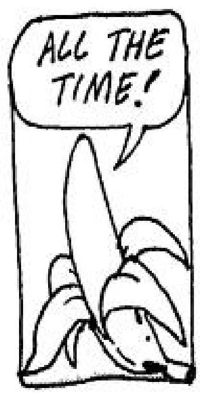
AP

US Marines lug gear out of a Super Stallion chopper during January's joint military exercise in Palayan City, Nueva Ecija. Next stop for GIs: Sulu.

Bananas lack sex? Not in RP


ALL THE TIME!

By Tessa R. Salazar

THE DAYS of seedless bananas in South America may be numbered for "lack of sex," but not in the Philippines where more than

BANANAS/A19

Consumer group hits oil price hikes

Gasoline, diesel at historic highs

By Ronnel W. Domingo

OIL companies may be engaged in price-gouging as pump prices of gasoline and diesel hit historic highs.

Consumer welfare advocate Raul Concepcion yesterday said the two biggest oil firms raised fuel prices by 29 to 39 centavos more than they should have this month.

Concepcion, chair of the Consumer and Oil Price Watch, said the oil companies should have raised the price of gasoline by not more than 26 centavos per liter and the price of diesel by 60 centavos.

But the oil firms, he said, raised the prices of the two products by 89 centavos and 65 centavos, respectively.

Petron and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum raised the price of diesel this month twice—first by 39 centavos on Feb. 3 and by 50 centavos per liter on Feb. 16. Gasoline prices were also increased twice—by 55 centavos and by 50 centavos per liter.

The latest round of price increases, the fourth in six weeks, brought the total increase to P2.14 per liter for gasoline and to P1.38 per liter for diesel.

"Why were the oil price increases made too early on Feb. 3rd and 16th when crude bought at higher costs in January would not be refined until the week of Feb. 17th?" Concepcion said in a statement.

He said he would ask for a

CONSUMER/A19

Sulu next stop for US troops

By Carlito Pablo and Martin Marfil

THE YANKS are coming back for a second round against the Abu Sayyaf—this time in Sulu.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday approved the holding of new RP-US military exercises in Sulu province for later this year, under what the Palace said were the same terms as last year's controversial counterterrorism training sessions on Basilan Island.

Balikatan 02-1, which ran from January to July last year, was credited with helping break up the Abu Sayyaf kidnap group. But a faction of the group is believed to have fled to Jolo, Sulu, where at least one other faction is based.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said it was Foreign Secretary Blas Ople and Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes who recommended that Balikatan 03-1 be held in Sulu. The kidnap group is holding four female members of the Jehovah's Witness sect and three Indonesian fishermen in the province.

Ople admitted to reporters that the

US/A18

VAL HANDUMON

IT'S NOT quite the "mansion" that a general described it to be but to the Marines, the capture of the house of MILF Chair Salamat Hashim capped the weeklong military campaign against the MILF entrenched in the Buliok complex.

MILITARY ADMISSION

MILF, not Pentagon gang, real target

By Dona Pazzibugan

IT WAS the MILF, after all.

A week after the fighting in Central Mindanao erupted, the country's highest ranking general acknowledged that the military campaign to capture the sprawling Buliok complex was indeed directed at the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

"What precipitated this action [was] the massing of MILF forces [in the area]," AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Dionisio Santiago yesterday said in a news briefing in Malacañang.

"We can't let them do (that) without the military doing anything,'" he added.

In the same briefing, presidential adviser on the peace process Eduardo Ermita said the MILF violated an Aug. 7, 2001 ceasefire agreement which considers the unreported massing of armed troops a "hostile'" act.

It was the first time the government admitted that the separatist group was the target of its operation, which was launched last Tuesday. Military officials had previously insisted that the operation was aimed not at the MILF but at "lawless elements" of the Pentagon gang, who had found sanctuary in the MILF stronghold.

Ermita and Santiago made the remarks after attending a meeting of the Cabinet oversight committee on internal security (Cocis), which assessed the worst fighting between the military and the MILF since the Macapagal administration assumed office in January 2001.

Ermita said the AFP realized on Feb. 9 that MILF troops had begun massing in Pikit, North Cotabato.

"The military got reports about the massing of armed groups reported to be lawless

MILF/A18

Europe struggles to close rift

BRUSSELS, Belgium—A deeply divided Europe struggled to close a rift over Iraq and speak with one voice to Saddam Hussein, though leaders were encouraged after resolving a month-long Nato deadlock on defending Turkey.

European Union leaders were to meet Monday for an emergency summit called amid warnings that continued disagreement could impede European integration and dilute the continent's influence on the world stage. European leaders will try to seek common ground on Iraq and draft a statement at the summit.

"We do not want dividing lines between the EU countries," Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis said Sunday in Athens. "We all want peace and we all want to try and find a more practical way of promoting peace."

The divisions, however, were reflected

EUROPE/A18

Girl with hole in heart needs big hearts

By Grace Cantal-Albasin
PDI Mindanao Bureau

MALAYBALAY CITY—In this month of hearts, 7-year-old Tracy "Kitkat" Elyana Paano needs all the love in the world so she may live normally.

Kitkat has not been attending preschool classes at the Bukidnon State College since December when doctors found that she was suffering from a congenital heart disease.

"The doctors said my heart has a hole and I am afraid of the operation. But Inang (her mother) said I must have it so that I can go to school. I miss school very much," she said in Cebuano.

Kitkat wants to be a teacher someday, but her dream can only come true if peo-

GIRL/A19

'Barangay hall in the sky'

By Juan Escandor Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CAMALIGAN, Camarines Sur—Motorists will hardly miss the unique structure when traveling to Barangay San Marcos in this small town.

Towering at 4.87 meters (16 feet) above the provincial road or 0.6 m (2 ft) more than the international standard clearance of 4.27 m (14 ft), the San Marcos Barangay Hall demonstrates what creativity is about when one is confronted with limited space. It is perhaps the only one of its kind in the country.

Dubbed the "barangay hall in the sky," the facility on concrete stilts solved not only the lack of adequate space on which to build government structures but also the absence of an evacuation center in the village.

As in other municipalities within the Bicol River basin area, Camaligan lies below sea level and suffers from periodic flooding. An hour-long heavy downpour would bring floods to the whole village where tributaries of the Bicol River meander.

Gerardo Prado, 42, barangay chair of

CAMARINES/A19

L R V
BARANGAY HAL.. IN THE SKY

JUAN ESCANDOR/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

HALL in the sky. Barangay officials of San Marcos in Camaligan town, Camarines Sur, can say they're on top of things. But the question begs to be asked: Is this legal?

Maganto case: Loose lips or crab mentality?

By Christian V. Esguerra and TJ Burgonio

WAS he badmouthed or simply a loudmouth?

Chief Supt. Romeo Maganto yesterday blamed "envious" police generals for his removal from the task force assigned to go after the killers of Romulo Kintanar, former chief of the New People's Army (NPA).

Maganto claimed that the badmouthing prompted Philippine National Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. to ease him out of the Kintanar slay investigation.

"Crab mentality is again at work here . . . Some generals are just so insecure," Maganto told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Ebdane directed Maganto on Saturday to focus on efforts to capture Supt. Rafael Cardeño, who allegedly masterminded the Dec. 31, 2001 killing of Baron Cervantes, self-styled spokesperson of the Young Officers' Union.

A police source said Maganto was

MAGANTO/A19

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers mostly over Visayas and Mindanao.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/18/03

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Second FrontPage

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
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Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Japan blocks OFW remittances

JAPAN is making it more difficult for Filipino workers there to transfer money to the Philippine banking system, the first casualty in the continuing standoff between Congress and the Paris-based global money laundering watchdog that has blacklisted the country.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said yesterday that a Philippine National Bank official had informed him that Japanese postal authorities had rejected a PNB application last month to set up a remittance system for the estimated 186,316 Filipinos living in Japan.

The news followed a decision Friday by the Financial Action Task Force to recommend additional counter-measures against the Philippines because of its failure to remedy loopholes in the Anti-Money Laundering Law (Amla) passed in 2001.

Congress last week beat a Feb. 12 deadline to pass amendments, but the FATF, set up by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development of industrialized nations, said the new measures failed to address "previously identified deficiencies" in the law.

Drilon said Isabelita Manalastas, the PNB senior vice president for Asia, had told him the Japanese postal system had rejected the remittance system because the Philippines was still on the FATF blacklist.

"In other words, each and every (Filipino worker) transferring money using the Japanese post office's automated teller machine is suspected of possible money laundering," Drilon quoted Manalastas as saying.

PNB president Lorenzo Tan said it was part of the bank's strategy to expand in Japan.

"We applied to use the ATMs of the postal office but we were not given the license pending the approval of the Anti-Money Laundering Act. I guess we have to get out of the FATF blacklist for us to get that business," said Tan.

The FATF has given the Philippines until March 15 to enact the changes or be hit by counter-measures, which Malacañang and finance officials warn could lead to delays in financial transactions.

The most seriously affected would be the seven million Filipinos working overseas who send their salaries home to their families.

Even the threat of censure is taking its toll. A recent 300 million euro bond issue by the Philippines fell up to 200 million euros short of target and analysts have bemoaned the uncertainty caused by the risk of sanctions.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is to meet on Thursday with key congressional leaders in the hope of convincing them to pass the revisions sought by the FATF in a bid to stave off further sanctions, Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said.

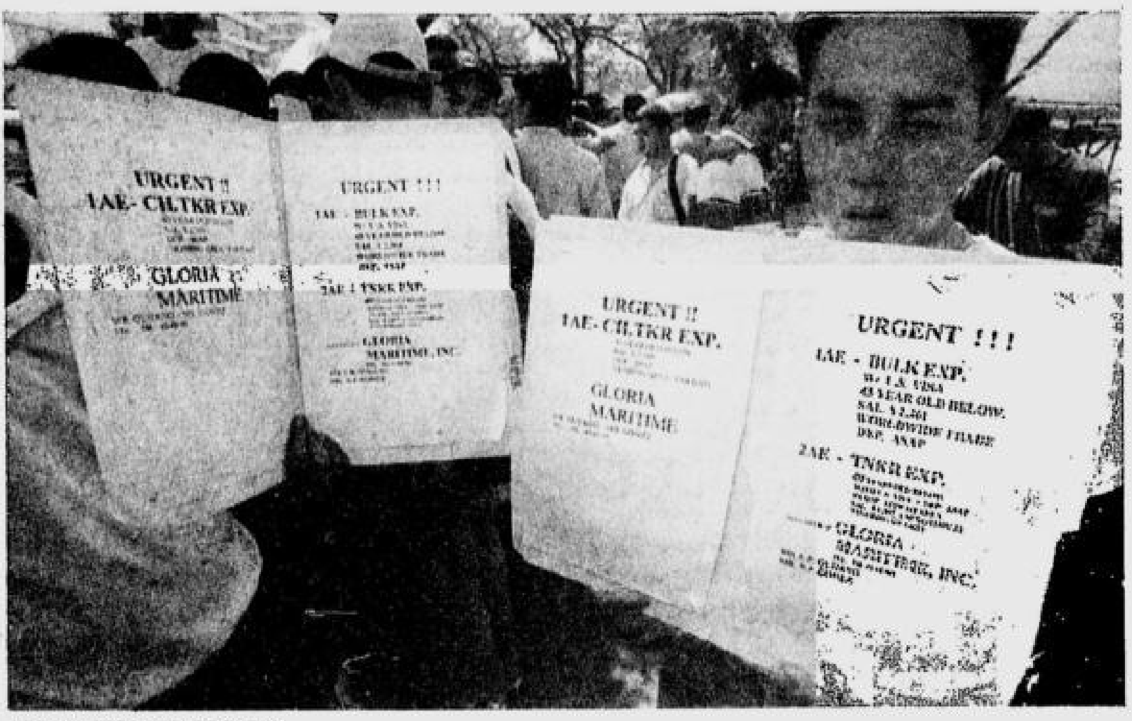
"The point is, everybody should now work together to find a way by which we could be able to satisfy the requirements of the FATF," Bunye said.

Under the version passed last week, regulators would still need a court order to look into suspicious accounts unless the money was suspected to be the proceeds from kidnapping, hijacking or illegal drugs.

The President has refused to sign the amendments into law to give Congress time to meet the FATF requirements.

The Senate yesterday agreed to conduct a question hour and convert itself into a committee of the whole on Wednesday to hear finance and BSP officials argue for the reconsideration of the amendments.

House Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales II said the House was waiting for word from the Senate on whether it would agree to reconvene the bicameral conference committee to pass a new and more FATF-compliant report. The House had until yesterday to reconsider the report while the Senate had two session days, Gonzales said. *Reports from Clarissa S. Batino, Cynthia D. Balana, Christine Avendaño and AFP and Reuters*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NEITHER WAR NOR . . .

Despite the strong threat of war in the Middle East, Filipino seamen continue to seek jobs that could take them to the troubled region.

DENNIS SABANGAN

UN report fails to sway RP, says Ople

By Carlito Pablo

LIKE the United States, the Philippines is not impressed with the report of United Nations weapons inspectors, which has delayed the war against Iraq—to the cheers of most countries in the world.

Briefing reporters yesterday afternoon after the meeting of the Cabinet oversight committee on internal security, Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople said the report presented last Feb. 14 by Dr. Hans Blix and Dr. Mohamed El-Baradei "left quite a few vital questions unanswered."

Ople pointed to the alleged 1,000 tons of nerve gas in Iraq that remained unaccounted for, as well as "several thousand liters of anthrax," a dreaded virus used in biological warfare.

On the other hand, he said the government has taken note of the "very wide sweep of peace demonstrations" throughout the world calling for a stop to the planned US war against Iraq. But, he clarified, the demand for peace worldwide did not mean a "demand for appeasement."

US line

Hewing closely to the US line, Ople said there should be a "principled basis for lasting world peace . . . that would include conditions under which terrorism can be controlled and finally eliminated."

This translated to "a world free of weapons of mass destruction which, if employed in the Middle East, will directly threaten the lives and safety of 1.5 million Filipinos working there," he said. "The mandate of UN Resolution 1441 must be complied with immediately and verifiably by the leadership of Iraq."

Upon receiving Ople's analysis, the Cabinet oversight committee on internal security chaired by Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo decided to ask President Macapagal-Arroyo to postpone the calendared meeting of the National Security Council.

The NSC was supposed to meet to finalize the country's position, had the US secured a UN mandate for its planned military action.

Ople noted that the UN Security Council would hold an open debate on the Iraq question for three days starting today, in which nonmembers will be allowed to participate.

No decision

Asked if the Philippines would join the debate, Ople said, "We have not decided that yet."

Senators yesterday said the growing anti-war sentiment worldwide indicated that the unilateralist policy of United States President George W. Bush was no longer working.

They said Ms Macapagal should take a cue from this development.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, former chief of the Armed Forces, said this unilateral policy was probably popular at the start in the US, but not outside it. He said he was glad about the current global disposition, "because this could reduce the danger of the United Nations being rendered obsolete" if President Bush and his coalition went ahead with the assault.

He was also glad that the President no longer echoed Bush's war policy, in her latest public pronouncements on Iraq, Biazon said.

Sen. Gregorio Honasan, a former Army colonel, agreed that the anti-war marches in many countries was a good sign.

"This means the US cannot have its way unilaterally," Honasan said. "The path of peace and all possible diplomatic options still have to be considered." It was now time for President Macapagal to clarify her position, he added. *With Cynthia Balana, Delfin Mallari Jr. of PDI Southern Luzon Bureau and a report from AFP*

RP too far away to worry about Iraq war, cops say

By TJ Burgonio

EVEN if the crisis in the Middle East becomes a full-scale war, Filipinos need not worry because Iraq is "half a world away."

Police officials made this point yesterday as they urged the public not to panic or hoard food and other provisions in anticipation of the United States' invasion of Iraq.

Besides, Chief Supt. Vidal Querol, police director for operations, told reporters, "Iraq has no delivery system that could reach the Philippines."

By this Querol meant Iraq lacked long-range missiles, effectively limiting the impending war within the "borders of Iraq."

Also, he said, it was the responsibility of the allied forces "to see to it that there will be no run-away war." That, he added, was the "American way."

Even Ambassador Roy Cimatu, special envoy to the Middle East who has been tasked to oversee the evacuation of overseas Filipino workers, was confident that the conflict would not spill over to neighboring countries, such as Kuwait, Querol said.

Moreover, the police official was sure the US and its allies would ensure that the country's oil supply would not be cut off. It was part of their responsibility, he said.

Meanwhile, Querol announced that the military and the police had set up a security apparatus to foil any possible terrorist attacks by groups sympathetic to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Vice President Teofisto Guingona would rather stop the war altogether. To this end, he said yesterday he was willing to "fast for peace."

He said President Macapagal-Arroyo and the National Security Council should wait for the final report of United Nations inspectors Hans Blix and Muhammad Elbaradei at the end of the month before deciding whether or not to support a military strike on Iraq. *With Norman Bordadora*

21 killed in Chicago nightclub melee

CHICAGO—Hundreds of people stormed the exits of a crowded Chicago nightclub after a disturbance early Monday, killing at least 21 persons and leaving many more injured, police said.

"Everybody smashed; people crying, couldn't breathe," said club-goer Reggie Clark. "Two ladies next to me died. A guy under me passed out."

Twenty-one people were confirmed dead, Chicago police spokesperson Pat Camden said.

There were more than 1,500 people in the two-story Epitome Night Club on the city's South Side when a fight broke out and someone released pepper spray or Mace into the air some time after 2 a.m., Fire Commander Will Knight said.

"It appears a disturbance from within led to mass chaos where people headed for the door. Most of the fatalities appear to have been crushed or had injuries due to suffocation," said police Officer Ozzie Rodriguez.

Cory Thomas, 33, went to the club about 3 a.m. to pick up two friends. As he waited outside, he saw people inside the club start to back up against the glass front door.

"You could see a mound of people. People were stacking on top of each other, screaming and gagging, I guess from the pepper spray. The door got blocked because there were too many people stacked up against it," he said.

"I saw them taking out a pregnant woman," Thomas said. "She was in bad shape. I saw at least 10 lifeless bodies."

Kristy Mitchell, 22, was one of the people trampled on the stairway.

"People were stomping my legs," she said. "When they pulled me up, I was dizzy and couldn't breathe."

Knight said the total number of injuries was unclear because many of those with minor injuries were taken to hospitals by family and friends.

AP, Reuters

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"LIVE YOUR DREAM"
Palm Grove Village Open House

Palm Grove Village, one of the projects of Property Company of Friends, Inc. launched its Open House last January 25, 2003 at Brgy. Buhay Na Tubig, Imus Cavite

The village, with a lot area of 55,752.10 sq.m. is crafted to capture the essence of an exclusive country club estate and delivers the same standards for easy living. Palm Grove provides complete amenities like the Town Center Hall, the community's gathering place, a covered basketball court, a swimming pool and a landscaped park built to provide families with active lifestyles. To make it more unique from the other villages.. Palm Grove has a themed commercial complex integrated at the main entrance of the village.

Of course, no village is complete without the perfect house. "The Oasis" has a floor area of 76.6m² and a typical lot area of 90.0m² which provides a maximum space and style that can be adjusted in any way you want to.

While it is almost impossible to have a nice house to live in without spending your whole savings, Property Company of Friends, Inc., offers easy access financing plans that allows you to save extra money but still gives you the comfort of living in a style

Come and live your dreams now at Palm Grove Village. Open House is from January 25 to February 23, 2003. If you reserve a unit now, you could avail of our discounts and win exciting prizes for you and your new home at the Grove.

House takes first step toward Charter change

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

AFTER a month-long delay, the House of Representatives yesterday opened plenary deliberations on a move to convene a constituent assembly to amend the 1987 Constitution.

Western Samar Rep. Eduardo Nachura delivered the sponsorship speech for House Concurrent Resolution 16, which also asks the assembly to change the form of government, amend certain restrictive economic provisions and put up a transition mechanism for the shift into a new system of government.

The opening of floor debates was deemed historic by some congressmen, who noted it was the first time since the 1987 Constitution was drafted that a Charter change movement had reached this stage. Previous attempts under the administrations of President Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada had failed.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. said they were "on the eve of victory."

Six other congressmen lined up to deliver sponsorship speeches for the assembly resolution and the recommendation of the House committee on constitutional amendments to amend the Charter now.

Nachura, the committee chair, reported the committee's recommendation backed by results of one year of consultations and hearings throughout the country.

He said that based on consultations, responses to questionnaires and from unsolicited sources, the committee had determined that "an overwhelming number of our people approve of constitutional reform at the earliest time possible."

"There can be doubt, as reflected by the results of these surveys, that there is a nationwide support for constitutional reform," Nachura added.

He said that 87 percent of the people supported Charter change now.

Nachura said the committee recommended an assembly instead of a constitutional convention as the most efficient and cost-effective mode of amending the charter.

Nachura cited the support of 955 civil society, business and socio-civic organizations as well as the resolutions passed by governors, mayors and local government leagues endorsing Charter change.

The House earlier held a caucus where 128 voted in favor of Charter change, and 126 supporting a shift to the parliamentary form of government.

The resolution itself was co-authored by 87 congressmen.

Baguio City Rep. Mauricio Domogan, Biliran Rep. Gerry Espina and Cagayan de Oro Rep. Constantino Jaraula were among those who sponsored the resolution on the floor.

Domogan harped on the need to amend the Charter to improve the economy, saying the country has been lagging behind its Asian neighbors.

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Flavier flexible, but Danding won't be shy in 2004 bid

By Cynthia Balana and Juliet Javellana

SENATE President Pro Tempore Juan Flavier has said he would give way to Majority Leader Loren Legarda if the two should find themselves running for the same position, that is, for president or vice president in 2004.

Businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco "would not turn his back" on the opportunity to help the country if the presidential nomination should suddenly fall on his lap, according to his congressman son.

Good option

Legarda, for whom the presidency and vice presidency are apparently a mere question of her choosing, insists she has not made up her mind although she considers the vice presidency a good option.

The latest round of presidential wannabe talk was set off by an INQUIRER report that declared aspirant Sen. Panfilo Lacson believes he may have found his lucky charm in Legarda based on the prediction of feng shui expert that he consulted in China, and the very earnest attempt by some 50 ruling party legislators to get Cojuangco to throw his hat yet again into the presidential derby.

The seer had told Lacson he would win in 2004 only if his running mate was an articulate woman with shoulder-length hair, beautiful face, tantalizing eyes and, most of all, a mole on her body. The description fit Legarda, according to Lacson, who boldly asked the senator if she had a mole on any part of her body.

Legarda

Flavier said he would be the first to withdraw if he and Legarda should find themselves running for the same position because he respected and admired Legarda so much that he wanted to ensure her victory in 2004.

Flavier and Legarda, both members of the ruling Lakas-CMD, are seatmates in the Senate.

Flavier said he believed Legarda would make a good president and that it was only a question of timing.

"I know and I can sense that she is really preparing for that (presidency). As to when, that is for her to decide. Timing for her is very important, whether she should go for it in 2004 or not," Flavier said.

Asked about the prospect of becoming Lacson's running mate, Legarda said it was not for her to decide as she belonged to the Lakas party.

Lacson is from the opposition Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino. Jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada's Partido ng Masang Pilipino said it would consider fielding Lacson should movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. decline to run.

Rep. Mark Cojuangco, the eldest son of the influential chair and chief executive officer of San Miguel Corp., said his father was "just listening" to the political developments, including a snowballing movement by 50 Lakas congressmen to draft the elder Cojuangco as the ruling coalition's presidential standard-bearer.

JV sues bank over secrecy

SAN Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito yesterday filed a complaint before the Monetary Board against officials of the Export and Industry Bank for allegedly violating his deposit secrecy rights.

The complaint comes at a time when the country's strict banking secrecy rules are being used by the Financial Action Task Force money-laundering watchdog as a reason to continue putting the Philippines on its blacklist of noncompliant countries.

Accompanied by his lawyer Rufus Rodriguez, Ejercito personally delivered his complaint to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas against 15 Export Bank officials led by its chair Sergio Ortiz-Luis.

He asked the BSP to revoke the trust license of the bank and to suspend, fine and even dismiss responsible officials. He said he would also file a criminal case against the Export Bank officials. *Clarissa Batino*

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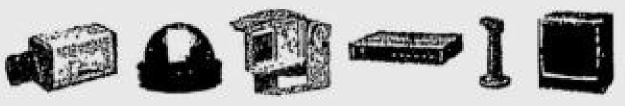

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MESSAGES

I extend my warmest greetings to the administrators, faculty and students of the **University of Santo Tomas** as you hold the *Blessing of the Beato Angelico Building*, formerly known as the Fra Angelico Building.

The inauguration of the new edifice embodies your university's commitment to constantly upgrade its curricula and adapt to an ever-changing technological landscape. Indeed, UST's capability to produce world-class graduates is again highlighted as you celebrate this milestone in your academic history.

May you continue your noble mission to constantly improve our educational system and to make it truly responsive to the demands of the 21st century. It is my fervent hope that you are one with me in envisioning a Strong Republic anchored on a well-educated and enlightened citizenry.

Sama-sama nating itaguyod ang ating matatag na Republika.

Mabuhay!

GMArroyo

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

……

I greet the academic community of the University of Santo Tomas as you celebrate the blessing of the Beato Angelico Building. In a special way, I convey my blessings to the College of Fine Arts and Design and the College of Architecture. This occasion is a sign of growth and development. But above all, this is a sign of God's grace. Indeed, all is grace!

We are all part of the wider Church. We have the same vision, the same prayer, and the same dream. We want to contribute in the building up of the church. And so let this improvement inspire and motivate you to help us sow the seeds of unity and peace, both in the Church and in the world.

From this building, may genuine Christian professionals emerge who will bring about the good of humanity. From this portals, I pray, may pass Christian leaders and builders.

Congratulations. God bless you always!

+ Jaime Card. Sin

+JAINE CARDINAL L. SIN, D.D.
Archbishop of Manila

……

On the occasion of the blessing of the renovated Beato Angelico Building on 18 February, 2003, I convey my cordial greetings and sincere felicitations to the College of Architecture and the College of Fine Arts and Design, and to the whole community of the University of Santo Tomas.

In the history of Philippine Education, the University of Santo Tomas has consistently presented a Christian vision of man and of the world that offers young students the chance for a fruitful dialogue between faith and reason. I therefore commend your venerable Institution for continuing to offer the most modern and relevant facilities as appropriate means to a deeper acquisition of knowledge, to provide an integral and persevering education to true human freedom and to guide the youth of this noble nation to the highest ideal that there is: Jesus Christ and his Gospel message.

As a center of total education, you do not only enable young people to acquire a human, moral and spiritual maturity, but you also inspire your wards to commit themselves effectively to the transformation of society by being concerned with the spread of the Kingdom of God by testifying to it with the example of their own lives. Thus, your University is also called to be one dynamic community of faith and evangelization, one big and united scholarly family.

May Mary, the Seat of Wisdom, be the solace and strength of the whole community of the University of Santo Tomas in carrying out their demanding and delicate role in the Church and in society. Through the powerful intercession of St. Thomas Aquinas, may God bless you all abundantly. Congratulations!!

+ Antonio Franco

+ARCHBISHOP ANTONIO FRANCO
Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines

……

Our congratulations to the administrators, faculty, staff, students and alumni of the University of Santo Tomas on the blessing of the *Beato Angelico Building* on February 18, 2003.

We are confident that the newly constructed building which will house the technical and design facilities of the College of Architecture and the College of Fine Arts and Design will help the students in bringing their knowledge and competencies in architectural, interior and industrial designs to a higher level of excellence.

We hope that the students who will have the opportunity to use these facilities for the improvement of their craft will be inspired by Beato Angelico, whose spirituality added depth and beauty to his works as an artist. May the Beato Angelico Building remain a fitting venue for productive exchange of ideas as well as a conducive place for nurturing young talents.

Again, congratulations and mabuhay!

ESTER A.GARCIA
Chairperson
Commision on Higher Education

……

To the Rector, the academic and administrative officials, the faculty, the students, and all the members of the Thomasian community I extend my warmest congratulations as you hold the blessing of the *Beato Angelico Building*.

Through this Building, the University of Santo Tomas proves its worth being the national symbol of Catholic education in the Philippines and the seat of Dominican Education in the Holy Rosary Province in the field of technical and design facilities of the College of Architecture and the College of Fine Arts & Design. It is my honor and pleasure to have been part of this momentous event in the history of UST.

It is my wish though that as we continually advance in the field of technological and industrial panorama according to the global standard of excellence, men and women who will pass through the portals of this building will unfailingly embody the ideals of true Christian education which is firmly vibrant in witnessing to the cause of their Alma Mater. This is what Blessed 'Fra Angelico' Giovanni da Fiesole witnessed in his lifetime as a Dominican painter who led supremacy in the art of painting in the 15th century. May this Building be a true haven of not only development in knowledge and skills but also of growth in wisdom and grace of God.

May the good Lord bless the good work of the University.

Ad multos annos!

REV. FR. ERNESTO M. ARCEO, O.P.
Vice-Grand Chancellor and Chairman of the Board of Trustees
University of Santo Tomas

……

On the occasion of the blessing of the *Beato Angelico Building*, I join the Thomasian community in celebration and thanksgiving upon the completion of the expansion of this nine-year old structure.

Formerly named *Fra Angelico*, the *Beato* was mainly used as a gallery for exhibits mounted by well-acclaimed and aspiring Thomasian architects and artists and, a venue for laboratory workshops of students from the College of Architecture and the College of Fine Arts and Design. Now standing proudly at eight stories, this building is the fulfillment of a shared aspiration to house under one roof state-of-the-art facilities that aim to produce Thomasians who can compete with the global standard of excellence in architectural, interior and industrial designs.

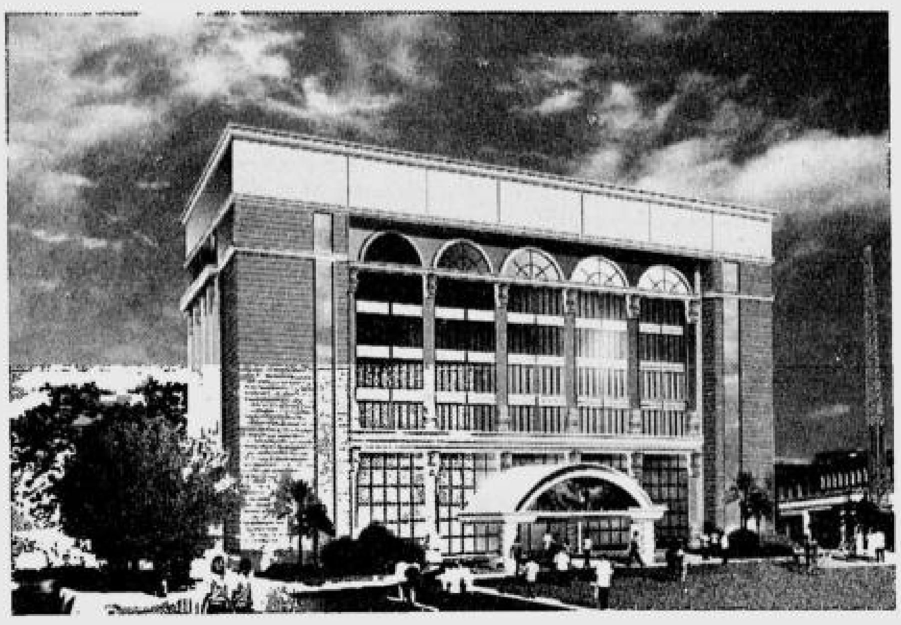
Like Blessed Fra Angelico, whose spirit glorified his paintings, the *Beato Angelico*, indeed, symbolizes the University's committed spirit in providing witness to the ideals of the University.

May this historical milestone further stir the University towards the attainment of its vision for the fourth centenary of its foundation, a vision which includes a more cognizant involvement in the modern trends of arts and sciences.

Congratulations and my best wishes to all!

FR. TAMERLANE R. LANA, O.P.
Rector, University of Santo Tomas

University of Santo Tomas
Beato Angelico Building



THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS, committed to providing its students with state-of-the-art facilities that would promote a more conducive learning environment, facilitated the inauguration of the Beato Angelico Building in 1994.

The building is a two-phase project, which began with the construction of a two-level structure designed as exhibition galleries and workshop areas for the students and faculty members. Its exhibit halls were also opened to alumni and friends of the art and architecture professions as well as to practitioners in the construction industry.

Designed for the College of Architecture and the College of Fine Arts and Design, the Beato Angelico Building's second phase is the completion of an eight-level structure, which will be inaugurated on February 18, 2003, the feast of its patron Blessed Angelico Giovanni da Fiesole.

The ground level is composed of shared facilities such as a gallery, exhibition halls, workshop areas for building construction activities, and sculpture and ceramic laboratories for the painting department. The second level is reserved for administrative offices, faculty rooms and department heads offices. A main auditorium and a multi-purpose hall, meanwhile, are located at the third level.

While the thesis consultation and lecture rooms, as well as the physics laboratory, are housed at the fourth level, the fifth level is composed mainly of four big computer laboratories, additional thesis lecture rooms, private consultation studios and student organization offices. The upper floors are allotted to classrooms, design studios, construction materials library, model making room, dark room, art and photography supply and storage area, and three spacious tiered atelier rooms for the Painting and Advertising Departments.

The Beato Angelico Building's design followed the concept of Contextual Architecture. Its architectural character was inspired by the Main Building, the Central Library and the Thomas Aquinas Research Complex Building. Significant design elements from these buildings were incorporated into the Beato in order to unify the new and the old structures within the campus. The design utilized the column capital and base, the wide parapet, the arches on the uppermost floor and ornamental mouldings, which were primarily associated with the University.

The Beato was decorated with different stylized vernacular plants found within the UST campus such as the Anahaw leaves *(Livistonia rotundifolia)*, Pandakaki *(Tabernaemontana pandacaqui)* and *Calachuchi* flower with *kamatsili* flower buds as noted in dean emeritus Carmen Kanapi's book entitled "A Compendium of Trees and Shrubs of the UST Campus". The Manila hemp, which the Philippines primarily exported during the 1950s, was also employed to give a local color to the neoteric design. These unique patterns were used in the façade, canopy, cornices and dadoes.

These architectural characteristics and design elements will also be incorporated in the proposed projects of the University such as Student Center, Health Service and Testing Center, and the Gymnasium and Athletic Center.

In the future, the University is seen as a campus with buildings, both old and new, having a unified architectural character that achieves coherence in the visual survey while at the same time maintaining its integrity and historical significance.

My warmest greetings and felicitations to the University of Santo Tomas on the inauguration of its Beato Angelico Building on February 18, 2003.

I laud your dedication and commitment o keep UST students at par with the best of the world by keeping them updated on the modern trends in arts and sciences, thereby preparing them to be able globally competitive in the fields of architecture, interior and industrial designs, as well as advertising and painting.

We, in the city government, ceaselessly tread avenues that will lead our beloved city towards urban renewal and development. We embark on these development efforts precisely to give our people the confidence in themselves and believe in our collective ability to introduce the meaningful changes. It is in combining these efforts, both in the public and private sector, can we achieve true progress for our proud capital City and consequently, for our beloved country.

As I congratulate all the men and women behind this endeavor of sprucing up the Beato Angelico Building for the benefit of all the professors and students, I commend all the officials and faculty members of UST for their vigorous commitment to provide high quality education and standard through the years.

Again, I congratulate you all, not only as the Father of the City, but as a fellow Thomasian.

MABUHAY!

JOSE L. ATIENZA, JR.
Mayor, City of Manila

……

On the occasion of the blessing and inauguration of the Beato Angelico Building, the faculty, students and administration of the College of Architecture give thanks to Almighty God and the Dominican Fathers for the gift of this edifice and its facilities.

We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in the teaching and learning of architecture, research and concomitant outreach services. The design of buildings and the environment to sustain 21st century living demands nothing less.

We are supremely confident that God, in His loving kindness, will grant us abundant grace in this endeavor.

AUGUSTO M. CONCIO
Dean, Colege of Architecture

……

We, the CFAD family and other members of the UST Community, would witness the blessing and inauguration of the Beato Angelico Building, a joyous occasion for all of us. This day also serves as a highlight in the fulfillment of our mission-vision as a College, that of being a globally-leading institution of creative visual artists and designers imbued with Christian values, contextualized in the Filipino culture.

This edifice enconces CFAD in the mainstream of global visual arts scene and helps in the redirection of our goal – that of producing world class visual artist and designers.

The CFAD family, then would like to extend our sincerest appreciation to the Dominican Fathers for the gift of this edifice and its facilities.

JAIME D. DELOS SANTOS
Dean, College of Fine Arts and Design

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Taxpayer suit filed to block absentee vote law

By Michael Lim Ubac

CLAIMING that certain provisions of the newly enacted Absentee Voting Law were unconstitutional, lawyer Romulo Macalintal yesterday asked the Supreme Court to stop the Commission on Elections from starting the registration process for about 7 million overseas Filipino voters.

In a taxpayer's suit, Makalintal asked the high court to issue immediately a temporary restraining order to stop the Comelec and Congress from "circumventing" the constitutional requirement on the right of suffrage.

Named respondents in the petition for certiorari and prohibition were the Comelec, Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo representing President Macapagal-Arroyo and Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin.

Boncondin was included in the suit to prevent the government from "spending and disbursing public funds" for the registration of Filipino emigrants.

Macalintal sought to declare as unconstitutional certain provisions of Republic Act 9189, known as the Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003.

He said the SC should declare null and void Sections 5 (d), 18.5, 19 and 25 of RA 9189, which the President signed into law on Feb. 13.

Macalintal pointed out that Section 5 allowed emigrants or permanent residents of other countries "who had already abandoned their residence in the Philippines" to vote in Philippine elections.

"Allowing Filipino emigrants or permanent residents in other countries to vote in an election in absentia is a violation of the constitutional qualifications for qualified Filipino voters," he said.

Macalintal pointed out that Section 1, Article 5 of the 1987 Constitution was "clear and unequivocal" that "suffrage may be exercised by all citizens of the Philippines . . . who shall have resided in the Philippines for at least one year and in the place wherein they propose to vote for at least six months immediately preceding the election."

He also cited the Caasi vs. Court of Appeals ruling declaring that "emigration to the United States by virtue of a 'green card' which entitles one to reside permanently in that country, constitutes abandonment of domicile in the Philippines."

He also echoed Sen. Joker P. Arroyo's objection to the law.

"In plain language, the voter must reside in the Philippines a year before the elections, not after the elections. The promise to return to live permanently underscores the fact that the voter is not an actual resident of the Philippines and therefore, is ineligible to vote," said Macalintal, quoting Arroyo who had voted against the absentee voting law.

Macalintal said the Constitution does not allow provisional registration or a promise by a voter to perform a condition to be qualified to vote in a political exercise.

He explained that prior residency or residence qualification was an indispensable requirement for one to be allowed to vote.

Tancangco quits 1 post but not another

PROBABLY the election commission's busiest official these days, Comelec Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco yesterday gave up her post as chair of the absentee voting committee.

But Tancangco, who recently hurdled a congressional move to impeach her, chose to hold on the committee taking charge of the P3-billion poll modernization program.

"I can't handle absentee voting anymore. Besides, I won't be around to see it anyway," Tancangco said in a phone interview yesterday.

Tancangco's term expires in February 2004, three months before the national elections that year.

The modernization program was "a major responsibility" that needed her full attention, she claimed.

The controversial poll official is to take charge of the bidding for electronic transmission and consolidation, which the commission en banc insists is a component of automation.

Had she not given up the absentee voting committee, Tancangco would have been in charge of reviewing the final draft of the implementing rules and regulations on overseas voting.

That task has been taken over by another commissioner Florentino Tuason Jr.
Blanche S. Rivera

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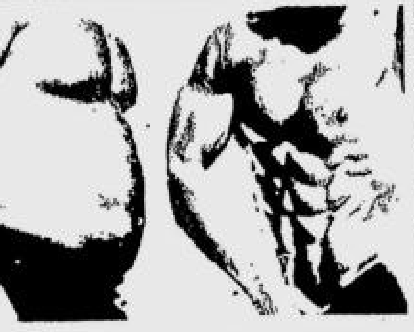

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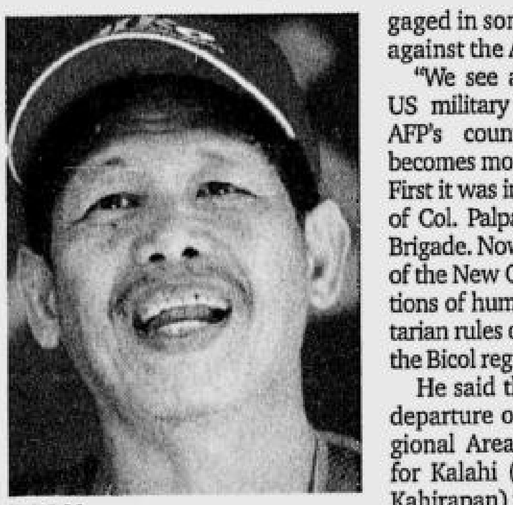
Top Red charges US directly involved in insurgency drive



ROSAL

LUCENA CITY—The United States has begun direct military intervention in the Philippines by getting involved in the government's anti-insurgency campaign, the spokesperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines claimed yesterday.

Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal cited the recent inspection tour of a US military official of Armed Forces operations in so-called hot spots in the Bicol region as a prelude to direct US intervention.

The inclusion of the CPP and its armed wing, the New People's Army, in the US State Department list of allegedly terrorist organizations was a preparation for such intervention, Rosal warned in a statement.

Contacted for comment, Maj. Jose Broso, spokesperson of the military's Southern Luzon Unified Command declined to comment, leaving it to the AFP's high command to issue a statement.

Rosal identified the US military official as Army Maj. Jeffrey Antonio who, he claimed, toured AFP commands and areas of "counter-insurgency operations" in Bacon and Donsol in Sorsogon province and in the towns of Libon, Camalig, Polangui, Oas and Ligao in Albay, for more than a week starting last Feb. 3.

He said the Philippine Army's 203rd Brigade and the Orgullo brigades of the new all-Bikolano 901st and 902nd Infantry Brigades served as Antonio's "escorts" and conducted intensive clearing operations covering Sorsogon, Albay and the interior of Camarines Sur to secure the US official's visit.

He claimed that Antonio was sent here to determine the best way to set up a joint civilian-military-diplomatic counter-guerrilla program in the country with the Bicol region as the pilot area.

"The so-called US-RP Humanitarian Assistance Program, which the US will be setting up in various places in the Bicol region will serve as a front for direct US involvement in the local counter-revolutionary war. US military officers like Maj. Antonio will be serving as counter-insurgency advisers," Rosal said.

He claimed it was not the first time that US military officials and advisers have been directly involved in operations against the communist guerrillas.

He said US military officials had been seen overseeing AFP operations in Mindoro two years ago "right before the most massive and intensive, longest-running and most brutal military operations ever by the AFP and the Philippine National Police took place on the island."

Rosal said that since the start of the Balikatan joint military exercises last year, US military officials have been serving as advisers and "trainors" of AFP units fighting the Abu Sayyaf in Mindanao and have also been engaged in some combat operations against the Abu Sayyaf.

"We see a pattern here. Where US military advisers step in, the AFP's counter-revolutionary war becomes more relentless and fierce. First it was in Mindoro with the use of Col. Palparan's notorious 204th Brigade. Now it is Bicol with the use of the New Orgullo Brigades. Violations of human rights and humanitarian rules of war are on the rise in the Bicol region," Rosal said.

He said that two days after the departure of Antonio, the 1st Regional Area Coordinating Center for Kalahi (Kapit Bisig Laban Sa Kahirapan) was launched in Bicol.

Kalahi, according to Rosal, is the government's new five-year "anti-poverty" program based on the national internal security plan of the Malacañang's Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security.

"The anti-poverty aspect is only lip service. The main purpose and entire content of the program is to coordinate and combine the military, police and bureaucratic machinery as well as propaganda and diplomatic initiatives for a comprehensive counter-insurgency program," he said.

Rosal warned that once US forces carry out a full-scale military intervention in the Philippines, they would suffer the same fate that they suffered in Vietnam.

He did not say if the recent attack by suspected NPA rebels in Gubat, Sorsogon was a warning to the US.

Three policemen and a 14-year-old boy were shot dead late Friday by five men believed to be NPA guerrillas who shot at a Kababayan Center, a police community assistance station, in the municipality. *Delfin T. Mallari, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, with a report from Donna S. Cueto*

FOR STREETCHILDREN

Doves were released at the inauguration yesterday of the Haven for the Children in Muntinlupa City, a project of the Congressional Spouses Foundation Inc. and the Department of Social Welfare and Development. From left are CSFI president Gina de Venecia, President Macapagal-Arroyo, DSWD Secretary Dinky Soliman, former President Cory Aquino and Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. EDWIN BACASMAS

Save the children, Dinky urges troops

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman yesterday urged the military to rescue the children-soldiers of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front instead of engaging them in battle.

At the same time, Soliman appealed to the MILF to stop using children in its war against the government.

"Don't let the children be combatants because that is stealing their childhood and perpetuates violence," she said in a telephone interview.

The military had found photos of children in uniform and brandishing firearms in the Buliok complex in Pikit, North Cotabato, when it overran the MILF camp last week.

Soliman said she would raise the issue with the government and MILF panels in the peace talks.

"We can [try to persuade] them [not to use children] until we are able to sit down and discuss the details," she said.

Soliman said she would lead the filing of cases against the MILF if it was found the group was using children as combatants.

But she said the children could be better helped with the military's cooperation.

"Undertake rescue operations so that we can take the children out of that situation," she told the military.

But Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Narciso Abaya said it would be difficult to spare, much less rescue, children involved in combat.

"You know fire-fights usually happen [across great distances], sometimes you don't even see the faces of your enemy," Abaya told the INQUIRER.

He cited an encounter in Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat on Wednesday where some of those killed were minors.

"The most the military could do," Abaya said, "is to turn over captured children to the DSWD." *Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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Judge fined for ruling from other court

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE SUPREME Court slapped a P5,000 fine on a retired Manila judge for ruling on a civil case that was no longer in his court in 1995.

In a full court resolution written by Associate Justice Vicente Mendoza dated Jan. 28, the SC justices unanimously penalized Judge Salvador P. de Guzman Jr. for "improper conduct."

The SC ruled that De Guzman, though now retired, was still "administratively liable" and that the decision finding him guilty must be "spread on his record" for the guidance of members of the bench.

According to the court, De Guzman, while he was a presiding judge of the Manila Regional Trial Court, continued to hear a motion for execution filed in the Makati RTC and therefore was "no longer under his authority," and later acted on it.

Court records showed that De Guzman, as a Makati RTC judge, handled the case filed by German national Alexander van Twest against his former business partner, Gloria Anacleto, and Interbank.

Van Twest alleged that Anacleto had withdrawn 269,779 Deutsch marks (about $500,000) from their joint savings account and transferred the amount to her personal account with Interbank's Buendia branch. The money belonged to him, the German said.

On Jan. 24, 1995, De Guzman rendered a decision on civil case No. 90-659 in favor of Van Twest. The bank was ordered to return the money to Twest and pay damages amounting to P950,000.

The decision was appealed but the judge, upon motion of Van Twest's counsel, ordered the execution of his decision six months later.

De Guzman argued that the civil case had been submitted to him for decision on May 27, 1993, or before his transfer.

The SC ruling said that on Aug. 19, 1993, "before he could decide the case," De Guzman was transferred to Branch 113 of the Pasay RTC. He was not designated acting presiding judge of Branch 49 of the Manila RTC until Nov. 29, 1995. But, the SC said, he decided Civil Case No. 90-659 while on detail there 10 months earlier.

On July 17, 1995, he granted Van Twest's motion for execution "pending appeal by Interbank."

The court said De Guzman had the authority to decide on the civil case, but "it was an entirely different matter for him to hear and grant the motion for execution of his decision pending appeal."

Stressing that the CA found De Guzman guilty of grave indiscretion, the SC subsequently set aside his order of execution.

Power barge attacked

DAVAO CITY—Two armed men believed to be members of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front fired a rocket-propelled grenade at a power barge of the National Power Corp. (Napocor) in Maco, Compostela Valley Friday night.

Adolfo Mirasol, Napocor regional manager, said damage was estimated at P600,000.

Col. Rodolfo Obaniana, chief of the Army's 701st Infantry Brigade here, said the grenade hit the steel beam and boiler of the power barge.

Security guard Florentino Navarro saw two men leaving the area after the incident. *Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Gov't orders warning labels on drugs with PPA

THE BUREAU of Food and Drugs (BFAD) has assured the public it would strictly enforce its order to drug manufacturers to put warning labels on medicines containing phenylpropanolamine or PPA.

At the same time, Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit downplayed fears that norephredine, a chemical substance in PPA, could be turned into shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride).

"Although the molecules are similar, it's not commercially viable to convert PPA to shabu," Dayrit said, over concerns that norephredine was on the list of banned substances in the Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

Yesterday, the BFAD faxed the INQUIRER a copy of its Advisory No. 2003-0001 which ordered drug manufacturers to put warning labels on medicines containing between 25 and 50 milligrams of PPA.

"It shall be emphasized that PPA at such doses is contraindicated in patients with severe cardiovascular disorders, tachycardia, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, hyperthyroidism and concomitant intake of monoamine oxidase inhibitors," the BFAD said.

The agency said it will only allow the "over-the-counter sale" of cough and cold medicines that contain less than 25 mg of PPA.

France Laboy, BFAD food and drug regulation officer, said the bureau will make sure that drug companies comply strictly with the order to safeguard the health of patients with heart problems.

Earlier, BFAD Director Leticia Barbara Gutierrez had admitted that "hemorrhagic stroke could occur in [those with hypertension or heart problems] who take [PPA] in high doses, three to six times more than normal."

A Yale University study established the danger of PPA to people with heart problems. The US Food and Drug Administration has declared unsafe all medicines with PPA.

But Gutierrez said PPA was "relatively safe" if taken according to a doctor's prescription. *Armand N. Nocum*

DOLE asks BI to hold alien arrests

THE DEPARTMENT of Labor and Employment has asked the Bureau of Immigration not to arrest resident aliens working in the country without a permit while it reviewed the guidelines for the issuance of Alien Employment Permits (AEPs).

Labor Undersecretary for Employment Manuel Imson said the DOLE was reviewing the AEP guidelines following requests from different sectors.

Imson said certain sectors wanted resident aliens to be exempt from the AEP requirement. AEPs are necessary for foreigners to be able to work here.

The DOLE stopped issuing AEPs since December last year in order to evaluate it. The review would be finished by the end of the month, Imson said.

"We have given a notice to the BI. It would have been chaotic if we did not," Imson said in a phone interview yesterday.

The BI has been arresting foreigners illegally working in the country, like entertainers and vendors. *Blanche S. Rivera*

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A temporary victory?

War is hell.
—William Tecumseh Sherman

EDITORIAL

SO NOW the world will have a temporary respite from war jitters. The 15-member Security Council of the United Nations has called for more time to be given to the UN inspectors and for enlarging the inspection force. And all over the world, protesters estimated at 8 million to 11.5 million sent a single message to US President George Bush: Don't invade Iraq.

But it may be a brief victory for the anti-war forces. Right now, the United States and Britain are working on a draft resolution that would authorize the use of force against Saddam Hussein. The softer text will not explicitly call for war, but when one asks for the use of force and seeks UN support for military action, where else would such an action lead to but war?

Judging from the massive demonstrations, it appears that the greater part of the world is against war.People are tired of war and conflict. They want peace. They want a tranquil time and place where they can go on with their lives peacefully and normally and where nations can continue to work to solve such age-old problems as poverty, ignorance and disease. Only those people and nations that have strong political and economic motives want to wage war at this time.

It is noteworthy that the biggest protests took place in countries whose governments strongly support the US plan to wage war on Iraq: 750,000 in London, England; 1.3 million in Barcelona and 600,000 in Madrid, Spain; about a million in Rome, Italy; and 150,000 in Sydney, Australia. In the big cities of the United States tens of thousands also took to the streets to protest against the war plans of President Bush. The governments of these nations would do well to listen to their people.

The numbers were small in Asian Muslim nations, but that was just to be expected. The protests are also relatively small in the Philippines whose 1.3 million overseas workers are sure to be affected by a conflagration in the Middle East. Probably Filipinos are again acting like little Brown Brothers, blindly supporting the plan of the Great White Father even if it will harm their sons, daughters, husbands and wives working in the Middle East and send the global economy and the national economy into a tailspin.

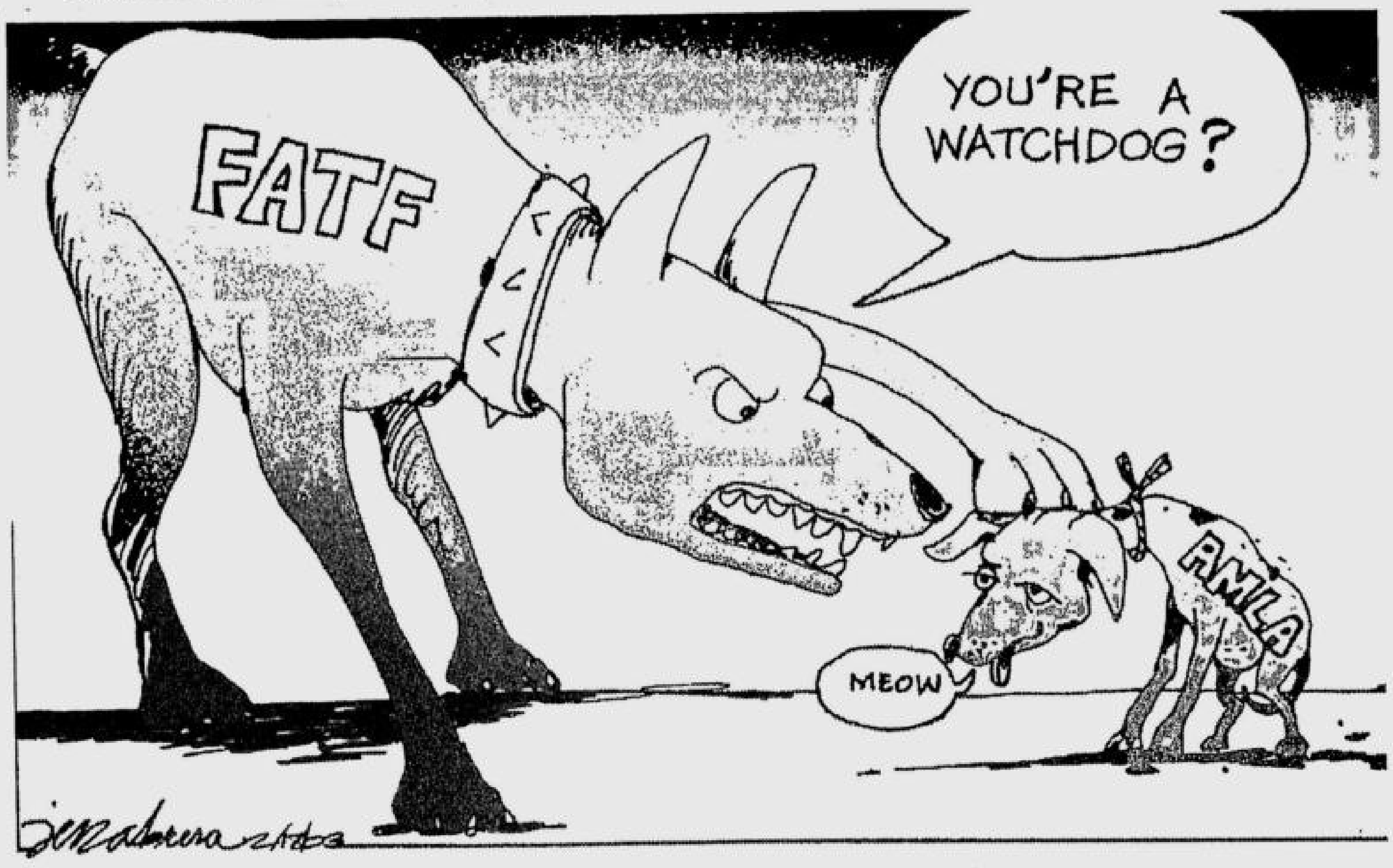
The United States says that it will wage war against Iraq so it can destroy the weapons of mass destruction that it is hiding and planning to use against other nations. (But the UN inspectors have not uncovered solid proof that Iraq does have such weapons.) Some US officials say that they want to make Iraq "the first Arab democracy."

But what really is President Bush's motive in wanting to make war against Iraq? Many commentators and analysts say that the real motive is to gain control of the oil of Iraq which has the second biggest reserves in the world. To grab Iraq's oil the United States is ready to defy the United Nations and world opinion and wage war.

A war in Iraq cannot be confined to its borders. It can be expected to spill over to some of the Middle East countries. It can be expected to set off retaliatory attacks by Iraq's supporters and sympathizers in the countries that support the United States. Thus, the Philippines, following President Macapagal-Arroyo's statement of support for Bush, is in possible danger in the event of a war in the Middle East.

A war in Iraq may not develop into a full-fledged global war, but its effects on the world are too horrifying to imagine: Loss of lives in the hundreds of thousands. Hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians caught in the crossfire, displaced and rendered homeless. Public works, private property and crop damage in the billions of dollars. Oilfields bombed or intentionally set on fire, sending the prices of oil sky-high, dampening the already sluggish world economy. A huge environmental and cleanup problem with the burning oilfields. Etc., etc.

The rest of the world must continue to exert moral force on the United States, Britain and the rest of the "coalition of the willing" to convince them not to wage war but to exhaust all peaceful means to make Iraq comply with the UN resolution. Let us all hope and pray that there will be no global or regional war in our time. In a war, especially in a high-tech war where armaments can kill tens of thousands in the wink of an eye, there are no real victors, no winners; all the world is the loser.



Too many buses on Edsa

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE EXPERIMENTAL "number-coding" for buses started yesterday in Metro Manila. Buses with plate numbers ending 1 and 2 were banned from Metro streets.

As this was being written, it was still too early to tell who won the battle of will between bus drivers and operators and the Metro Manila Development Authority. An association of bus operators had announced that it would defy the MMDA "number-coding" scheme as it had not formally received the MMDA order. "It's your lookout," said the MMDA. "Violators will be apprehended."

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando should not back out of this confrontation with the bus operators. He is right and he has the support of the citizenry.

Sumosobra na ang bus operators. They're not only out of line, they're also out of bounds. The "number-coding" for buses will be only for five days. Jeepneys are already observing it. If the experiment is successful and traffic improves, then everybody will benefit, including the buses. They can have more trips because of the faster traffic flow. But the operators don't even want to try it for five days. They don't want to cooperate.

When the MMDA took one lane from private vehicles for the exclusive use of buses, the owners and drivers of private vehicles did not complain. Now that it is the turn of buses to follow an experiment, it does not want to cooperate.

Anybody can see that there are just too many buses on Edsa and they contribute heavily to the traffic congestion. Buses are bumper-to-bumper along the whole of Edsa. Two lanes of the five-lane Edsa are reserved only for buses but they stray into the other lanes and no traffic policeman apprehends them. However, a private vehicle that strays into the bus lanes is immediately apprehended. Maybe the government, especially the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), has been giving the bus operators too many concessions. That is why they are getting spoiled.

* * *

It was thought that the Metrorail would force the reduction of buses plying the Edsa route as more and more commuters use the elevated rail which is faster and cheaper. But even as the buses lose more and more passengers to the Metrorail, the number of buses does not diminish. They still clog Edsa. And anybody can see that they are only less than half-full. Logically, bus operators should be losing money and should be shifting some units to other, more profitable routes. But no such thing is happening. The buses are still as many as ever on Edsa.

Some say that it is because of colorum buses. So what is the LTFRB under Dante Lantin doing? And if the Edsa route is no longer profitable, why would colorum buses go there? So the reason must be that it is still profitable. The passengers may be fewer but the buses are still making money.

Which leads to only one conclusion: bus fare rates approved by the LTFRB are too high. Why else would they still make money despite the low passenger volume? As Claire de la Fuente, president of the Integrated Metro Bus Operators Association (Imboa), said, "We're not stupid to keep on fielding our buses if they're not earning money." Which means they're overcharging their passengers. And that the LTFRB has been remiss in its duty of fixing the right fares for PUBs.

* * *

But that is not the only sin of the LTFRB under Lantin. There are already too many buses on Edsa (in fact, all over Metro Manila), but the LTFRB keeps on giving franchises for more units. They say that many of those buses have no franchises. They are *colorums*.

Well, if they are, why are not more of them being apprehended? The truth is that while the Land Transportation Office has been able to eliminate fixers, they are still as plentiful and as busy as ever at the LTFRB. If Lantin does not know this, he must be either deaf and blind, or they operate with his tolerance. And what is Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza doing?

The LTFRB should stop issuing franchises for Edsa bus routes. In fact, it should not renew expiring ones and cancel those for units caught with many violations.

Provincial buses should not be allowed to enter city limits. Their franchises are for provincial routes. Their terminals should be outside the boundary of the metropolis as their buses contribute to traffic congestion in the city. There are many city buses to take passengers to their terminals outside city limits anyway, but no, provincial buses are allowed to ply and pick up and unload passengers on city streets and even have their terminals in some of the city's busiest streets such as Liwasang Bonifacio and Edsa.

The traffic problem in Metro Manila is not the problem only of the MMDA. Other government agencies must help solve it.

* * *

Poor Bayani Fernando, he is already overworked but he continues to be the object of hate of sidewalk vendors, squatters and bus and jeepney operators and drivers. He has the support of the vast majority of the people but they are silent whereas his opponents are noisy. So his opponents get the attention of the media while the silent majority attracts no attention.

More citizens should wake up and voice their support for Bayani Fernando. There should be more like him, government officials who do their duty without fear or favor. How can we encourage more officials to be like Fernando when we do not show support for him and it is only those who oppose him who are heard by the media? Fernando was even put on the NPA hit list. And he is only doing his duty. Fernando is a real *bayani*, a genuine hero. May his tribe increase.

Winner

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

TILL the end, Bobbit Sanchez chafed at the leash. His family had been telling him not to drive anymore, especially after his quadruple heart bypass several years ago, but he would hear none of it. Driving, he argued, relaxed him; it was his therapy.

Whether he actually believed this or not, nobody knew—or will know anymore. Last Saturday, he insisted on doing so, after going to the grocery, to meet with a client. He got to his lunch meeting, but complained of chest pains. If I know Bobbit, he would have done so only when he couldn't bear it anymore. Alas, when they got him to the hospital, it was too late.

All his life, Bobbit was like that, chafing at the leash, defying the proscriptions set by his time and place, tugging at the limits set by his body and soul. He first came into public life in 1970 when he was elected to the Constitutional Convention, joining the progressives there. As a result of which, he was compelled to go into hiding during martial law, when Marcos demanded that the convention, or what remained of it, finish its work under the baleful glare of the military.

Many years later, Bobbit co-founded Mabini, the legendary lawyers' group that defended presumed subversives at a time when to do so was to be tagged a subversive oneself. The group was called a communist front by the lackey press and harassed by the military. Bobbit chaired the group from 1980 to 1984.

He ran for and won a seat in the Batasang Pambansa, serving as MP from 1984 to 1986. He would tell me later that the only reason he did so was that the threats to his life had become grave and imminent. His fellows begged him to lie low for a while, but he decided instead to make a bid for public office, figuring a high profile might help stay the hand of his enemies. He was suing for time. He never expected to win, his rivals being moneyed and powerful, and was astounded when he did. There and then, he saw the writing on the wall on the Marcos regime. Public wrath was roiling, and there was no stopping its explosion.

It was after Edsa that Bobbit really proved his worth. It was not the way he comported himself when fighting a tyranny that he showed the stuff he was made of, it was the way he comported himself when he was in power. Bobbit became Cory's labor secretary, and swiftly earned the ire of the conservatives, who swiftly gained the upper hand in government, by doing his job. As labor secretary, he sought to serve labor first and last—not management, not business, not himself.

Years later, Butch Abad would fail to pass the Commission on Appointments as agrarian reform secretary because he was "pro-farmer," a charge leveled at him by landlords, who dominated Congress and were well represented in the commission. Bobbit was the original. He was accused of being "pro-labor" by his enemies, who obviously did not see the monumental irony of their position. Who did not object to the chief of the trade and industry being pro-business, to the chief of finance being pro-banks, or even to the chief of foreign affairs being pro-American. There Bobbit was, the chief of labor, and his sin was that he was pro-labor!

The bigger wonder of it was that Bobbit was not a leftist, if by that is meant someone who embraced the leftist cause. He did not belong to any leftist organization or carry its agenda. If he served labor, it was simply because his conscience bade him so, the same reason he fought for human rights as a lawyer years before. Unlike Abad, however, Bobbit's "sin" would invite more punishment than simply not passing the commission. It would nearly cost him his life.

He was targeted for execution in those murderous times, when the power-hungry were contesting the transition to power, by the same group that tortured and killed Lando Olalia. Bobbit got a tip from a sympathizer not to go home because he was next on the hit list. He went straight from office to airport, and cooled his heels in Hong Kong. When he got back, the "God Save the Queen" plot had been busted, and he was fairly safe. Many years later, when the coups had turned into a distant memory, Bobbit, flushed with drink, would ask a RAM leader who had been toasting to dreams and principles in a party, "That's all very fine, but why did you want to kill me then?" The fellow was speechless.

Cory fired Bobbit anyway, doing to him symbolically what his detractors failed to do to him physically.

But Bobbit never regretted his decision. He would just laugh heartily each time he told the story that when he was labor secretary his table groaned with roasted pigs and calves and expensive drinks and guests in their finery, but that all disappeared immediately afterward. He never saw it as a loss, he saw it as a gain. He lost only fawners, he gained friends. He lost only the trappings of power, he gained the backbone of dignity. He lost only raiment, he gained a soul.

For most of his life, Bobbit defied the limits of repression, the limits of convention, even the limits imposed by a body beset by affliction. The jaded, or opportunistic, would say he was foolish to do so, especially as all his efforts seemed to have gone for naught, thwarted by the hand of adversity. Yet last Sunday night, I went to his home in Pasig, where I had finished a bottle with him on many an occasion, and I saw the crowd that gathered there, the ordinary and the important, though there was no telling who was who, clothes and position not particularly mattering in that place, and I suddenly realized something: Bobbit never really lost any of the battles he fought, even the last one that brought him to this pass. He won all of them. Here was proof ineluctable, men and women, rich and poor, in the pain of loss and joy of recollection, come to pay tribute to a man who was in the end:

A winner.

Camaraderie at PMA homecoming

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

MY husband and I drove to Baguio City last weekend to attend the annual alumni homecoming at the Philippine Military Academy. Last Sunday, the newspapers were filled with accounts of massive demonstrations in various cities around the world against a possible war to be launched by the United States and Great Britain against Iraq. At the grandstand that morning, while waiting for the start of the ceremonies with Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., Senate defense committee chair, as guest of honor, I spotted former AFP Chief of Staff Roy Cimatu, who is coordinating the Macapagal administration's efforts to help Filipinos in the Middle East. General Cimatu had just come back from the Middle East three days earlier and I asked him about evacuation arrangements in case of war, and he replied that all the contingency measures are in place and the Filipinos' morale is high. He is confident that if war should break out, it would last for perhaps only a week and not the three months that the Gulf War took over a decade ago.

* * *

Under that scenario, Cimatu said, the best thing for Filipinos, especially in Kuwait next door to Iraq, to do is stay where they are and keep in touch with the Philippine embassies which have the government's contingency plans. If the situation in Kuwait becomes untenable, they have been advised to converge at the border and proceed to Saudi Arabia. Cimatu assured that if the war breaks out he will fly to the Middle East to be with the OFWs throughout the crisis.

How will he communicate with the tens of thousands of Filipinos? With a smile Cimatu said that inasmuch as most of the Pinoys there are domestics, the embassies are in touch with them individually by cellphone. Messages will be sent by text as well as over a two-hour daily Filipino radio show. I thought that if the Edsa II was mounted through texting, why not indeed mobilize Filipinos in the Middle East for any contingent action through texting! Considering how texting has come to play such a major role in our lives, it's hard to imagine how life was before the cellphone came along.

* * *

Also at the PMA, I asked Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza what would happen to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3. I told him that earlier, as my husband and I together with retired Brig. Gen. Juanito Aquias of Baguio City were walking to the grandstand, we ran into a PMAyer who is now into investment banking. He said his foreign clients were all worried about how the government treated BOT contracts, wondering if those entered into by a previous administration would always be reversed by the succeeding administration. This PMAyer, who wishes to remain unnamed, said the foreign investors were watching how the dispute between the government and Piatco would be resolved.

* * *

This column has suggested, even before the Senate hearings conducted by three committees many months ago, that the two parties should just quietly renegotiate the onerous provisions of the Piatco contract, instead of the government declaring it null and void. Unfortunately, the group of advisers around GMA, led by Gloria Tan-Climaco, sold her the idea of a bloody confrontation. Now, after so much blood-letting, the parties seem headed for the negotiating table after all, but so much damage has been done.

I stressed to Mendoza that he should listen to his colleagues, Trade Secretary Mar Roxas and Tourism Secretary Dick Gordon, who are batting for the opening of Naia 3 as quickly as possible. He assured me that there is already a "win-win" solution to the controversy, but he refused to disclose its details yet. Let's hope so.

* * *

The PMA homecoming was a lot of fun. It was a good way to forget, even for a brief moment, the problems weighing down on the country and the world. The camaraderie instilled by four years of being together through some very rough times is something that is hard to replace and will always be there. As the various classes led by this year's jubilarians—the Diamond Jubilarians of Class '43, the Golden Jubilarians of Class '53 and the Silver Jubilarians of Class '73—passed in review on Borromeo Field, they looked splendid in their various costumes.

The baron of the Class '53, retired Brig. Gen. Angel Kanapi, my longtime neighbor in Camp Aguinaldo, recalled to me that they started out with 95 class members, and were reduced to 58 by the time they graduated in 1953. Today there are 36 surviving members who are all over 71 years of age, except for Kanapi, who, by his own immodest admission, was not only the youngest at 70 but also "the handsomest." The class president, retired Brig. Gen. Mel Melendres, quickly objected. "Let's just say Gely Kanapi is one of the handsome ones," he said. There was a lot of banter as the alumni gamely paraded around, cheered by their wives from the grandstand.

* * *

As for the Diamond Class '43, less than 10 are now around, and only three—retired Brig. Gen. Felizardo Tanabe (now 82), Col. Telesforo Umali and Brig. Gen. Castor Buenaflor—were present that morning. To this class also belonged the late Col. Romeo Honasan, father of Sen. Gregorio Honasan, and the late Col. Benjamin Carpio Sr., father of my doctor at Camp Aguinaldo, Benjie Carpio Jr., now chief of Fort del Pilar's station hospital. The three elderly alumni gamely went down to the parade ground with their canes to receive their PMA medals from their wives, as their class widows looked on approvingly.

Seeing how so many ladies have survived their husbands, I was reminded of the old adage that God made women much tougher physically than the men because they are the ones who ensure the continuance of the human race.

Voices for peace

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THERE are reports of a "deep division" within the Macapagal Cabinet, a chasm between the "doves," composed mostly of those recruited from or maintaining links with civil-society groups, and the "hawks," identified in a report as being led by Foreign Secretary Blas Ople, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and National Security Adviser Roilo Golez.

Oddly enough, the clash of opinions and sentiments is not over a domestic hotspot such as Cotabato, where what was initially billed as a police operation against a bandit group has since escalated into a major military operation against Muslim separatists. The Cabinet flare-up instead focuses on the looming war against Iraq, and the proper Philippine response to United States' agitation to whip up international support for the invasion it has been itching to mount.

I'm actually glad reports of dissent within the Cabinet have surfaced. At least it shows us, and the world, that not everyone in the government is caught in a thrall over the power of America, that not all our officials are given to, like Stepford wives, echoing the line of the American president.

A positive note is that the objections raised at Cabinet level are couched in terms of national interest, one question being raised whether the United States could guarantee that Filipino workers in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Kuwait, would be protected once the shooting starts. This is a departure from the old approach to foreign relations, which was almost always expressed in reference to US policy and harked to the "special relations" between our two countries. Even contrary views were articulated in this context, being "anti-American," and not necessarily "pro-Filipino."

* * *

THE "doves" within the Cabinet are aligned with much of international opinion on the looming war against Iraq. As yesterday's front page showed so dramatically, millions of people around the world have been marching for peace, calling for moderation and for giving negotiations and political solutions a chance before rushing headlong into military operations and the armed option.

Even as the Bush administration applied diplomatic and military pressure, using an arsenal of economic and development aid, military assistance and anti-terrorist rhetoric, to build an international alliance in favor of invading Iraq, peace activists managed to build their own wide network against the war, mounting what the news agencies called "the largest coordinated series of peace rallies in history," marching in more than 600 towns and cities in six continents over the weekend.

Indeed, if war is too important to leave to generals, then politics and policy are too valuable to leave to politicians. Ordinary people, who will in all likelihood be the first to suffer and suffer most in the event of war, should make their voices heard even as governments join the chorus for a "preemptive strike" against Saddam Hussein.

And with Cabinet secretaries adding their voices, however muffled, to the public debate, there's reason to hope our official position on Iraq will be guided not by geopolitics or quid for the American quo, but by our own interests as a nation, and our own sense of values and morality as a people.

* * *

WHAT strikes many about the current US administration's obsession with Iraq and Saddam, is that it seems wholly out of proportion with the situation in the Middle East where, in their views, the real violator of UN mandates and threat to peace is not Iraq but a country considered a staunch friend of the United States—Israel.

A friend sent me an e-mail asking a series of questions that clearly demonstrates the double standard being applied in this volatile region by the world's "only remaining Superpower." Read on:

Which country alone in the Middle East has nuclear weapons? Answer: Israel.

Which country in the Middle East refuses to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and bars international inspection? Answer: Israel.

Which country in the Middle East seized sovereign territory of other nations by military force and continues to occupy it in defiance of UN Security Council resolutions? Answer: Israel.

Which country in the Middle East created 762,000 refugees and refuses to allow them to return to their homes, farms and businesses it confiscated? Answer: Israel.

Which country in the Middle East is in defiance of 69 UN Security Council resolutions and has been protected by US vetoes? Answer: Israel.

* * *

WHICH country confiscated almost 750,000 acres of land from the 1.5 million acres comprising the West Bank and Gaza Strip? Answer: Israel.

Which country in the Middle East has killed 435 Palestinian school children? Answer: Israel.

Which country in the Middle East has demolished 7,000 homes? Answer: Israel.

Which country in the Middle East refuses to prosecute its soldiers who have acknowledged executing prisoners of war? Answer: Israel.

Which country on this planet has the second most powerful lobby force in the United States, according to a recent Fortune Magazine survey of Washington insiders? Answer: Israel.

Which country in the Middle East has the authorities forcefully preventing Palestinian refugees the right to return to their homeland against the UN Security Council resolution 194? Answer: Israel.

Which country in the Middle East has prevented 90,000 Palestinian students from attending school? Answer: Israel.

Which country killed 1,251 and injured 18,507 people by the security forces and settlers? Answer: Israel.

Which country receives over $5 billion in aid each year from the United States, more than the whole of Africa? Answer: Israel.

Perceptions of the Filipina and other characters

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

(Some time in May, Louie-Paul Heussaff, founder of S.O.S. Philippines, is coming out with a book, entitled "Filipina," that will honor the [extra] ordinary "nanays and manangs," not the glittery "beauty queens." This is complementary to the celebration of the "French Spring in Manila" in June. At the same time, Unilever is also celebrating the Filipina this year with their campaign, in line with Dove products, to search for Filipinas of substance who have worked in their communities but have remained unrecognized. I wish I could write that the Filipina is coming into her own but as the following article shows she has always known who and what she was and is.)

Most of the 19th century writers I've read conceded that we women were superior intellectually and morally to the men. Naturally, I am not saying this is true. However, the Filipina was perceived as having more affection than her male counterpart, more heart and sentiment toward the good as well as for evil. She had little fondness for the European but whoever or whichever of them demonstrated some affection or sympathy under any circumstance, her reaction was sincere and profound.

On more than one occasion, she was the help and refuge of needy and poor Spaniards; in others, a titular angel without whose protection, persistent observation and vigilance they would have been assassinated perfidiously more than once. It might not have been true all the time, a common occurrence or the rule of the day but certainly the Filipina's vast potential from which much could be developed was recognized.

On the down side, she was perceived as being excessively jealous and did not in general tolerate her husband's infidelity whereas the man was considered more tolerant of her transgressions. She was also more active in business than her male counterpart.

But aside from these commendable qualities of business acumen, she was said to possess abominable defects that were difficult to tolerate. Arrogance, vanity, pride, presumption and priggishness reached a high degree in the Filipina. She was touchy, distrustful and had a marked tendency to command and dominate. She was in general the sovereign of family life, addicted to gambling, passing days and even entire nights with barely noticeable intervals holding cards in her hands.

She was cautious and circumspect, skittish and finicky in her behavior toward the European or the *mestizo* but audacious, arrogant, impudent and even insolent with her own countrymen.

How true a portrait of the Filipina this may have been is a matter of opinion, of course.

Another character who peopled the landscape was the Chinese *mestizo*, a factor of some importance because of their numbers as well as the advantageous economic situation that most of them enjoyed in general. In the intermarriage of the Chinese with the Malay, the former contributed to the offspring a seal of astuteness, sagacity, hard labor, with clear standards and wisdom that as far as the observer was concerned was not imparted by the European to his.

Among the European inhabitants of the Philippines at the time, the British were the most numerous followed by the Germans and lastly by some Frenchmen. The other Europeans did not reach half a dozen. They devoted themselves to commerce and to small industries. It was in the commercial realm where the European had a very respectable representation, especially the British. Some commercial enterprises of theirs surpassed those of the Peninsulares and Insulares in funding and influence.

The European did not intervene or interfere in matters partaking of public or official character and had little or no influence socially, morally or politically. Among the Occidentals, some were from Syria and Mesopotamia and were in the business of selling hardware, fancy jewelry and other articles of little importance. There were also natives of Hindustan and the Malaccan Peninsula dedicated to buying and selling articles from China and Japan such as silk, porcelain, objects of nacre and other oriental products. Locally they were known as Malabars.

The Chinese, truly an exotic plant for the European observer, emigrated from their native land in fabulous numbers. This was not merely due to proximity but for economic reasons. For centuries, he had been coming monthly in boats that frequently traversed the sea from Hong Kong and other coastal cities in China to Manila, packed tightly and stacked like tobacco leaves. No matter how miserable, unpopulated and isolated an island was, no matter its size, you would find the Chinese laboring with his special ingenuity.

The Filipino, on the other hand, was observed in Manila or some other town either playing *panguingui* or billiards or at the cock fights, while the Chinese toiled in his workshop. He was considered sober, thrifty and economic so that the addition would sooner or later total in his favor.

Competition between European commercial enterprises and Chinese was very difficult because for every European store there were a dozen or more Chinese establishments of every kind. In the provinces, the European could not even shod himself or eat bread if it hadn't been for the Chinese.

(From R. Gonzalez's "Filipinas y Sus Habitantes," 1896.)

Coming to terms

I WILL not apologize. Neither will I seek pity. I have been blessed with so much. And although my life has not been all rosy, it has been rich with color, tears and laughter, highs and lows. I am alive, and I thank God for that. I don't intend to make excuses. I just want to tell a story.

At twenty-something, I am alone. I cannot say that it is really by choice, for given the choice I would have preferred to spend my life (though I myself am not certain if I want to spend it forever) with this man who until now seems to be a fleeting dream. His is the image that haunts me. Somehow there but never really willing to linger.

YOUNG BLOOD

Judy

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

It's rather funny, but the people around me, well-meaning as they are, tell me to get hooked up already because I am not getting any younger. And after considering that I have a flourishing career, the doomsayers predict that the higher my income bracket becomes, the fewer my choices of a mate will be.

Statistically, there are more women than there are men. (Although last time I looked in the INQUIRER, there were actually more men than women in the Philippines. But yes, Virginia, do they suffer in quality? Pray tell.) Older, accomplished men prefer younger women. And though I am not about to refute all these, I will not allow these conclusions to prevent me from living a full life.

My day job is lawyering and my other passion is teaching. I also write. Between all these, my very supportive nuclear family and my many circles of friends who all know how to party, I am certain I do live a full life. Perhaps richer than most people can claim.

I am not an angry feminist. God knows, people who do not know any better have likened feminism to "women bitter about men." Please. That does not only reflect a limited view of the world but it smacks outright of bigotry. I think the feminists are doing a great job at pushing women empowerment. I commend them. But as I said, I am no feminist—angry or otherwise.

I am human, though. And more than anything else, I am a woman. I feel. When I laugh, when I cry, I laugh and cry with all the passion in me, living and breathing.

I want to celebrate myself. This is who I am. I can take care of myself but I would not shy away from strong arms that would be willing to take care of me—once in a while. I can foot the bill for a fancy dinner but it would not hurt if I were made to feel special by someone by footing it for me. I love (have loved) with teeming, uninhibited passion and I am not (never have been) sorry for it. But more importantly, I can be alone with my soul, and drink in silence just thinking, without being afraid.

Yet people look at me as if I were hiding behind a false bravado. They try to figure me out and think I couldn't be happy the way I am now. They cannot understand how an accomplished career woman like me can be happy when I am alone, when nobody fetches me in the office or escorts me to dinners or parties. It is beyond their comprehension that I can take a cab alone at night, with my pepper spray in hand of course, without whimpering in fear for my safety. I may be different from everyone's idea of happiness, of completeness, but I am not necessarily fictitious. I just am.

I confess: One day, I hope to bear a child. Carry that life in my womb, beneath my heart and nurse it from my bosom. I yearn to carry that life in my arms and sing to her (or him) about life and love. I will wish for her to grow up unafraid, undaunted as the trees that blossom from the earth. I will show her love and the beauty of life despite the pains.

I have yet to meet my baby's father, but with the same certainty that I knew I would pass the bar exam, I now know providence will lead him to me. In the meantime, I will continue to flourish as a person, do the things that make me tick, excel in my endeavors. And party—sometimes.

The one thing I have learned thus far is that it pays to discover the freedom that laughing at myself brings. It does not mean I take my life and myself less seriously than others. It simply means being able to sit back, look at my imperfections, take my lemons with a grain of salt and tell myself that crap happens to the best of us. Then move on. I know for a fact that while I may have lost a few battles I have not yet lost the war.

If providence chooses not to interfere, there is always science. Hey, man landed on the moon a long time ago. Getting knocked up can't be that hard. After all, I did pass the bar. Anything else should be easier.

Judy, 29, practices law and serves as a part-time lecturer at a law school. She plans to write someday a book about life, love and passion without mentioning law.

THEY SAID

No enemy

"Why do we want to fight Iraq when Iraq is not fighting with us?"
—Sen. Manny Villar

A mother's fears

"Because they chose to join the US Navy, I knew that someday they would be in hostile situations. But while I have prepared myself to accept that, that's always the case for those in the military, my mind could never be at peace because I always fear for their safety."
—Isabel Miclat, mother of two who are in the US Navy

Defining Christianity

"She was a Christian who defined Christianity according to her own relationship with Christ and not according to the narrow-minded rules and prejudices of a Church."
—Armida Siguion-Reyna, describing her mother during a meeting of families excluded from the definition of the Catholic Church

Bush-fire

"Let it not be said that UP stood silent as the Bush-fire grows into a conflagration."
—University of the Philippines President Francisco Nemenzo said in a statement against United States' impending war on Iraq

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US has turned sympathy into disgust

ONE contemporary American philosopher said, "Let no man of good will take it upon his conscience to advocate the rule of force—outside or inside his country. Let all those who are actually concerned with peace, those who do love man and do care about his survival realize that if war is to be outlawed, it is the use of force that has to be outlawed."

Nowadays, the United States seems to be acting against that philosophy. What the United States is doing now is throwing its weight around with force, policing the world with force, dealing with suspected security threats with force.

True, the United States was hit hard by terrorism and the whole world sympathized with it. But the sympathy turned to disgust as the United States became more arrogant and prone to labelling those outside its sphere of influence as evil.

What the United States is advocating is the use of force in a brutal and sweeping manner and it is putting fear in the hearts of many. What would that force wreak? What will be its repercussions—a global economic recession, to say the least, or a nuclear war, to say the worst?

And yet, the people who belong to the top echelons of our society are so unequivocal about their support for war against Iraq. Is it because they have the means to secure themselves if worse comes to worst? What about the majority of us who have limited means of coping with the demands of daily living let alone a war? Are we going to be just sitting ducks in a shooting gallery or a statistic of the collateral damage of war? Such uncertainties are hard to live with.

—ABIGAIL V. FLORES, San Juan Baño, Arayat, Pampanga

Road discipline's the thing

I HAVE seen at least two articles in your paper criticizing the lifting of the so-called vehicle volume reduction scheme. I suppose most of the complaints came from the jeepney and bus operators. They claim that private vehicles are the primary cause of the heavy traffic in Metro Manila. And this affects their capacity to earn a living (*nag-hahanap buhay lang kami*).

But what about us? We drive our cars to our offices or appointments also to make a living.

The truth of the matter is that drivers of public utility vehicles lack discipline. I will give you four examples:

1. At the South Luzon Expressway, slow-moving trucks, buses and passenger jeepneys (and some private vehicles) prefer to travel in the innermost lanes even if they are moving at 40 to 60 kph only.

2. At the North Diversion Road at night, trucks, buses and passenger jeepneys (and some private vehicles) occupy the innermost lanes traveling at the speed of 40 to 60 kph trying to overtake other trucks, buses and passenger jeepneys (and again some private vehicles).

3. Along Taft Avenue in Manila, from Plaza Lawton up to Buendia, there are only two intersections where a motorist can turn left: Vito Cruz and Buendia. Traffic signs saying "No left turn" are strategically placed and visible in all the other intersections. Yet, you will see buses, taxis, jeepneys and some private cars (even occupying two lanes) executing a left turn (or sometimes even a U-turn). Worse, jeepneys, buses and taxis unload and pick up their passengers in the middle of the street in complete disregard of other motorists behind them.

4. Along Sucat Road in Parañaque, tricycles are everywhere even when they are not allowed on main roads. Jeepneys unload and pick up passengers while occupying two lanes, immediately after a main intersection or the gate of a subdivision.

With just these few examples, you will agree with me that it's the lack of discipline of drivers and the lack of enforcement of traffic rules that is causing much of the traffic. Indeed the volume of vehicles and the population have increased over the years, but the reasons for our traffic mess include these bad habits.

—ISMAEL V. ZAPA,
ilosy@ph.inter.net

Reminder to GSIS executives

PERHAPS it is time to remind the executives of the Government Service Insurance System that the GSIS was established for the benefit of its members and aged pensioners, not to purchase exotic memorabilia or such. Even some of our soldier-members out in the fields are fighting not for a Congressional Medal of Honor, but for crisp cash. Get the point?

May your consciences be re-awakened. Thousands upon thousands of GSIS members and aged pensioners truly wonder where your vaunted managerial expertise is.

Just a reminder, gentlemen.

—AGUSTIN R. ARCOLAS,
pensioner, Carmenville
Subdivision Hinigan,
Negros Occidental

Radio Veritas on plug-pulling report

THIS has reference to the news item titled "Veritas pulls plug on Linggoy" last Saturday.

I read the article in amazement. First, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office has never sponsored Jose Luis "Linggoy" Alcuaz's 15-minute radio program. It was simply a sustaining public affairs program. Since his exposé last Jan. 2, 2003, he has maintained his regular program and opted not to discuss PCSO matters over our station out of ethical considerations.

Second, never did I mention in my memorandum last Feb. 10 that Alcuaz had violated the rule of fairness and balance. (I have enclosed a copy of my memorandum for your reference.) Alcuaz, however, refused to acknowledge receipt of the memorandum.

—MELO M. ACUNA,
manager, Radio Veritas-Global
Broadcasting System Inc., 162
Veritas Tower, West Avenue cor
Edsa, Quezon City

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Memories of war

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

"I AM tired of these men leading us into war but whose only experience of war has been Hollywood and television."

I am paraphrasing one of the speakers at a London anti-war rally held last Saturday and featured in a BBC newscast. The man didn't look old enough to have himself experienced World War II, but one gets the impression that many Europeans, even younger ones, do grasp the cruelties of war more than Americans do.

One must remember that the United States has not—since their own civil war in the 19th century—experienced any massive armed conflict on American territory. The most bloody incidents they suffered in the last century were the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and the 9/11 holocaust in 2001, but each of these attacks consisted of one strike, bloody yes, but not protracted as the wars were in other parts of the world.

Europe suffered grievously during the two world wars. World War I, really mainly a European war, saw, by conservative estimates, some 18 million lives lost. World War II claimed, worldwide, 50 million lives, about 10 million in Europe. More destructive weapons killed many more in less time: a few weeks of carpet-bombing of German cities killed up to 600,000 people.

The British anti-war demonstrator was right about "Hollywood and television" influencing our images of war. Hollywood's versions of war are filled with fearless unflinching heroes fighting for "freedom" and "democracy." Documentaries, using actual footage shot during wars, show a different face: despair and pain, among soldiers and civilians, fighting wars where the forces of good and evil weren't quite as clear-cut and simple as the movies make them to be.

Movies desensitize us, the exchange of firepower becomes as entertaining as fireworks. The documentaries remind us there's more to war than sound effects. What has always depressed me are the scenes of people fleeing war. I remember one scene in a Chinese documentary, showing people fleeing the Japanese. There was one old woman crawling on her knees, her face totally contorted by hopelessness and helplessness. The commentator explained tersely that she had bound feet and could not keep up with the other refugees.

Also depressing are scenes after a bombing, of people wailing as they return to their homes, now leveled to the ground. Even more horribly, you realize the scenes repeated over and over again in different times and places: recent footage of the rubble of Palestinian homes following Israeli punitive raids is all too similar to that of European cities at the end of World War II.

But people's memories of war seem far too short. The irony is that with cable television we now get to watch as wars unfold, and yet become even more inured. I have written about how the international cable networks' coverage of the 9/11 carnage reduced everything to a silent film, the screams and blood edited out.

Sanitized as they were, the coverage of New York's twin towers was still graphic enough, conveying the violence of the assault and the sorrow and outrage of a nation that followed.

In contrast, we know little of life behind "enemy" lines. Try to remember the images of the Gulf War in 1991, when we watched, live from our living rooms, the attacks. Remember how the bombs raining down on Baghdad were reduced to flickering lights in the sky, almost like some meteorite shower. Did we ever stop to think about what was happening in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities as those bombs were dropped?

Last Friday the British newspaper Guardian featured memories of Maggie O'Kane, a reporter who covered that Gulf War in Iraq. Shortly after she arrived in Baghdad, her taxi driver took her to his home, offering shelter. She watched as the taxi driver's children sat around a dining room table cutting up a cotton table cloth into squares—to be used as gas masks.

O'Kane also witnessed wounded Iraqi soldiers being brought in to Basra, a bus station outside Baghdad. Here, the wives, mothers and daughters would wait, rushing at each vehicle that came in. O'Kane writes:

"Like black bees in a honeycomb, they were hurling themselves at the survivors, pulling at the bloodied, wounded men in search of their sons, their fathers and those they loved. 'Have you seen him?' 'Where is he?' 'Is he not with you?' Then, as each heard the news, she would fall to her knees to mourn for one of the 37,000 men who would not come home. It went on all night, a wail of pain and desperation."

O'Kane contrasts those scenes with a Newsweek article she picked up a few days later, gloating over the victories in Iraq and providing "obscene detail of F16s and laser-guided missiles."

I remember those victory stories, too, and a letter from a Filipino-American back in 2000, chastising me for an anti-war column I had written. Wasn't I aware, he asked, that American weapons were now so "precise" there would be a minimum of "collateral damage?"

Ah, collateral damage. A more devious term I cannot imagine, a term that allows us to shrug off civilian deaths and injuries, as accidental and incidental. Justifying collateral damage makes it so much easier for us to erase memories of war. Suddenly, the civilians don't count, which is why we don't ever get to see what happens behind the war fronts, in homes and schools and hospitals.

The memories of war need to be removed from ownership by individual nations. We need to learn to grieve for the dead and rage against war, invoking memories of Dresden as well as Hiroshima, Baghdad and New York City.

I wonder, too, what images we Filipinos carry of war, outside Hollywood and local flicks. What, exactly, do we remember of wars fought on our soil: the Filipino-American war, World War II, or even more recent carnage—the looting of Jolo in the 1970s, the burning of Ipil in the 1990s and the running war in Pikit?

The memories of war, whatever the time and place, must become common cause for humanity, memories kept alive so that more may live.

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

TESDA DIRECTORS' OPEN LETTER TO DG LIBAN

'...no compromise on moral integrity in the TESDA family'

Director General Dante V. Liban
This Authority

Dear Sir:

As Executive, Regional and Provincial Directors of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), we are dismayed by the renewed media attack on our integrity and credibility as long-time officers of this organization, especially as the press and opinion columns are pointing fingers every which way.

In our earlier letter to you dated 31 January 2003, we voiced out our concern and called your attention to such "misleading and somewhat reckless generalizations" in media that would tend to "benefit some but would (likewise) tend to undermine the integrity and credibility of everybody else" in TESDA. We were ready to give you the benefit of the doubt when you declared that "hindi ako ang nagpalabas ng mga iyon". And you assured us that you will do something about such unwanted and unwarranted press releases.

True enough, press statements of the past week centered on the supposed "objection" of the Secretary of Labor to the transfer of OPA testing from TESDA to the private sector, in spite of the reported "ceasefire" instruction from the Secretary.

It is grossly sad, however, that the first working day of the week began with a very sour note (in the Inquirer column of Mr. Neal Cruz) about TESDA being a "sham" in the past, until you and your bag of reforms came into the picture. (It is interesting to note how Mr. Cruz has turned 180 degrees from an earlier column on the same subject which he wrote sometime towards the end of 2002 that was strongly critical [to say the least] of your administration.)

All of us are part of that "TESDA in the past" and we therefore express our dismay, disappointment and anger on these irresponsible and reckless attacks on TESDA and on our persons through such press reports. Once again, we appeal to you to lift a finger to redress this grievance.

We are also extremely disappointed over your failure and the officer-in-charge of the Overseas Performing Artists (OPA) Unit to produce the much-sought-after inventory (and complete list) of Artists Record Book (ARB) issued during the DG's incumbency.

This was the singular subject of two voluntary offers of assistance from us in the TESDA compound for the preparation of the list of ARBs issued to OPAs, first made verbally some three weeks ago and second through a formal letter to you dated 31 January 2003.

You will note, Sir, that accountable forms, as the term implies, have to be accounted for by the responsible officer or unit. Failure to establish, to operationalize and to maintain such documentation for accounting and auditing purposes may constitute negligence on the part of the responsible officer and his immediate superior. Given the volume of ARBs issued and the seeming inability to produce any such inventory, there may even be sufficient reason to affix the term "gross" to the word "negligence".

We steadfastly believe that such ARB inventory will prove or disprove the alleged "wanton corruption in TESDA" including what seems to be unmitigated extortion activities of certain persons, the reported sale of ARBs to the tune of P25,000 to P45,000, the suspected substitution of recipients of ARBs in favor of "talents" who have not gone through the required tests or auditions, the peddled stories of "assessors" who issue passing grades to talents who have the right connections and means, and the complaints that you yourself are allegedly oblivious to all these.

At this late hour, it may not be too much to expect you to take personal responsibility for the generation of the ARB inventory since the OPA Unit is directly lodged within your Office and all the personnel assigned to the OPA Unit are not organic to TESDA, being all your favored (personal) appointees.

Like you, Sir, we definitely adhere to the proposition that "there will be no compromise on moral integrity in the TESDA family".

While we continue to anguish in the face of the unfortunate turn of events in TESDA, we will do our level best to uphold the integrity and credibility of the organization that we have painstakingly developed and nurtured.

In the end, we vow to ensure that truth will prevail.

JUAN M. SABULAO, CESO III
Director In-Charge
Project Monitoring Unit

JUANITO C. CUEVA, CESO III
Regional Director
Regional Office No. XII, Cotabato

AGRIPINA P. ZAFRA, CESO III
Director-In-Charge
Office of Non-formal TVET

AUGUSTO A. CAPIO, CESO III
Executive Director
Skills Standards and Certification Office

ERNESTO A. BELTRAN, CESO IV
Regional Director
Regional Office No. VII, Cebu

MA. SUSAN P. DELA RAMA, CESO III
Executive Director
Planning Office

ELMER K. TALAVERA, CESO IV
Executive Director
National Institute for TVET

CONRAD G. BARES, CESO IV
Provincial Director
Province of Pangasinan

PILAR G. DE LEON, CESO III
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Regional Office IV-B MIMAROPA

CLIFFORD A. PARAGUA, CESO III
Director-In-Charge
Regional Office IV-A, CALABARZON

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Executive Director
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Project Monitoring Unit

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Office of the Chief of Services for Administration

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District Director
National Capital Region

ADVT.

PASYALAN BAYAN 2003

BAGUIO CITY

MESSAGE

Congratulations on the occasion of the 23rd Anniversary of the College Assurance Plan, and the 21st Anniversary of CAP Pension Corporation.

As one of the pioneers in the industry which introduced the first educational plan in the market, the Filipino family shall continue to look forward to your commitment to provide security for the education of their children while maintaining the highest levels of transparency, accountability, responsibility and fairness to protect the plan holders and strengthen the industry.

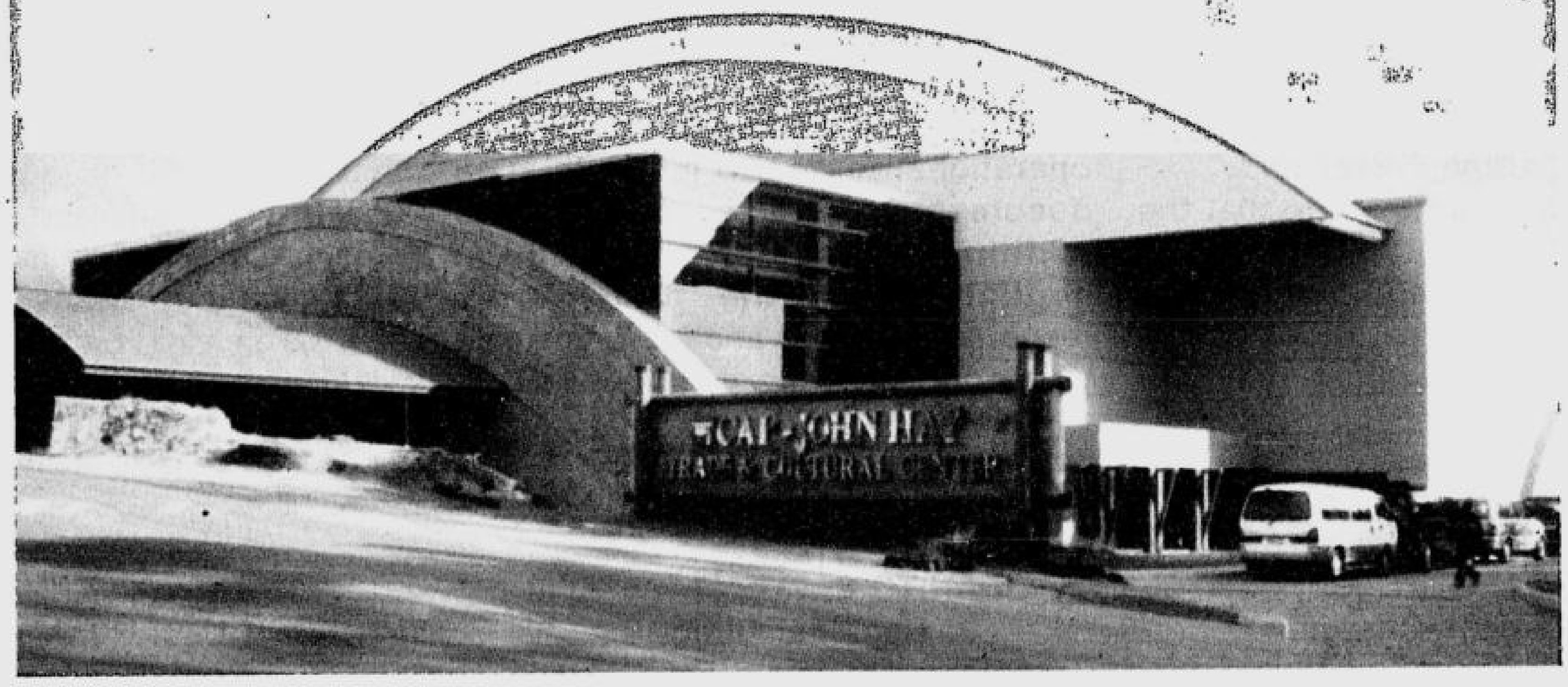
The inherent human desire to have some guaranteed security for the future is still the main reason why pre-need plans are purchased by the young professionals, teachers, small entrepreneurs, newly-weds among others. The threat of an impending war in Iraq is another cause of anxiety for Filipinos who at this time would need a strong assurance that their savings and investments will take care of any eventualities. In this regard, there is a need to assure the plan holders that there is effective corporate governance in the industry.

There are proposed bills from both Houses of Congress to establish a pre-need plan code that will serve as guide to regulate and supervise the industry, setting the standards, safeguards, rules on investments, solvency and over-all operations.

Let us support the reform towards good governance so that the plan holders will attain their goal of security and protection, while also helping mobilize savings and develop the capital market.

JOSE ISIDRO N. CAMACHO
Secretary, Department of Finance

We mark this day with THANKS.



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Today, we celebrate the blessing of CAP-John Hay Trade and Cultural Center. To highlight this momentous occasion, no other event is more appropriate than CAP's 23rd Pasyalan Bayan. Tonight, in this new landmark in Baguio City, CAP's men and women of excellence will be welcomed and honored in a grand fete of recognition.

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Hundreds of US troops pour into Turkey

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey—US preparations for war in Iraq have gathered momentum with the arrival of hundreds of troops in Turkey, ahead of the possible deployment of an invasion force to march on Baghdad from the north.

Some 500 soldiers were reported to have disembarked on Sunday from five giant US Air Force cargo planes at a heavily guarded air base at Diyarbakir, some 650 km southeast of Ankara.

They were believed to be engineers and logistics experts tasked with upgrading Turkish military facilities under a deal struck earlier this month between Ankara and Washington.

As they arrived Turkish leaders were meeting to consider US requests for a much larger deployment of combat troops.

Several hours later, Nato diplomats in Brussels struck a hard-fought agreement to bolster Turkey's defenses to ward off any preemptive strike from neighboring Iraq.

Under the deal, Nato will provide Patriot missile systems, Awacs surveillance planes and biological and chemical protection units to Turkey.

Ankara has been under strong pressure from Washington to allow tens of thousands of US troops to pass through Turkey into northern Iraq to support a main attack on Baghdad from Kuwait in the south.

But Foreign Minister Yasar Yakis, who returned on Sunday from talks with US President George W. Bush and top US officials, told reporters it would be "very difficult" to gain backing for the plan from the Turkish parliament.

Recent opinion polls show more than 90 percent of Turks are opposed to a war to rid Iraq of its alleged weapons of mass destruction, despite Washington's offer of billion of dollars in financial support in exchange for Turkey's cooperation.

According to the latest edition of Newsweek magazine, Turkey has raised the price of its cooperation with Washington's war plans by demanding that 80,000 of its own troops be allowed into Iraq to "establish 'strategic positions'" as much as 225-273 km inside the border.

"That would take Turkish troops almost halfway to Baghdad. These troops would not be under US command," the report added, quoting Turkish sources, who said Ankara had only agreed to coordination between US and Turkish forces.

Northern Iraq is home to some of the country's richest oil fields and the key cities of Mosul and Kirkuk.

But it is also a complicated patchwork of ethnic rivalries, including a divided Kurd population which wants self-rule and a Turkman community which looks to Ankara for support.

The Turkish government has said that in the event of war it would send its troops into Iraq to maintain order and prevent a repeat of the 1991 Gulf war when some 450,000 refugees fled into Turkey. *AFP*

Saudi daily to Saddam: Step down, save Iraq

RIYADH—An influential Saudi daily on Monday urged Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to take the courageous step of standing down to save Iraq from a US war and restore a degree of unity to the Arab world.

"By taking such a stance to rescue Iraq, Saddam will not be seen as a defeated man. It is a wise, reasonable and heroic decision that may spare him from being pursued legally," the semi-official Al-Riyadh daily said.

"Baghdad must see the serious consequences with eyes wide open . . . Foiling the American pretexts and justifications (for war) requires personal courage from Saddam Hussein," a front page editorial said.

Al-Riyadh, which normally reflects the thinking of the Saudi leadership, pointed out that for a proposed Arab summit to be successful, "Baghdad must realize that the issue is not normal."

It said a reasonable stance from Iraq would enable Arabs to unite in dealing with the United States and have an impact on international developments.

"The (Arab) summit will not provide miracles, or resolve complex issues," but through a responsible position by Iraq, it can succeed in transforming the Arab world into an entity that respects itself and the world, the paper said.

Al-Madina newspaper warned the Iraqi regime against misinterpreting the massive worldwide anti-war demonstrations.

"Most of the catastrophes Iraq and its neighbors have suffered were the result of the (Iraqi) regime's misinterpretations of events," it warned.

The English-language Riyad Daily said the onus was still very much on Iraq. *AFP*

US Marine Cpl. Joseph Fuchs, from South Bend, Indiana, of the 1st Marine Division, holds the Dragon Eye aircraft on Feb. 16 near the Iraqi border in Kuwait. The Dragon Eye is a short range experimental reconnaissance plane used to see enemy positions. GETTY IMAGES

Aussie PM sticks to guns despite protests

SYDNEY—Prime Minister John Howard stuck to his guns over Iraq Monday, insisting he was not out of step with his people despite some of the biggest anti-war rallies ever seen in Australia.

A defiant Howard said that while he was aware many people disagreed with his support for the US campaign to disarm Iraq, public opinion could not be measured simply by the numbers at protest rallies.

"In the end, my charge as prime minister is to take whatever decision I think is in the best interests of the country and I believe the way we are handling this is in the best interests of Australia," he told commercial television.

More than 500,000 people jammed the streets of the six state capitals at the weekend, up to 250,000 in one of the biggest protests ever seen in Sydney.

Australia and Britain are the only two countries to have sent troops to the Gulf to join the US military buildup in preparation for war.

Greens Sen. Bob Brown called on the government to hold a referendum on whether Australia should become involved in a war against Iraq, saying the massive turnout at anti-war rallies showed Australians were against it.

"There are Australian lives at stake here as well the lives of many innocent people in Iraq, and everybody in this country ought to be given a say," he said.

Opposition Labor leader Simon Crean, who was shouted down by anti-war protesters in Brisbane on Sunday because of his support for a UN-sanctioned invasion, said Howard's refusal to be swayed proved he was out of touch with public sentiment.

Howard, who has twice previously sent troops into conflict in East Timor and Afghanistan, does not believe polls indicating overwhelming community opposition to a US-led war in Iraq, or the huge anti-war protests are a true reflection of where voter opinion will finally lie. *AFP*

Peace rallies sending Iraq wrong signal —Koizumi

TOKYO—Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Monday echoed US dismissals of a weekend of protests against war on Iraq, warning such rallies would send the wrong message to Baghdad.

"We have to be careful not to send the mistaken message that Iraq is right," Koizumi told reporters at his official residence. "The ball is in Iraq's court. The international community needs to send Iraq the message that it must cooperate quickly and fully."

An estimated 5,000 protesters joined a "peace parade" in Tokyo's trendy Shibuya district Saturday night while another 100 demonstrated in southern Kadena, Okinawa, home to the biggest US air base in the Far East.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda acknowledged "a peaceful resolution is desirable," while maintaining Japan's tough stance.

"It depends on what Iraq decides to do," said the top government spokesperson. "Time is running out."

Koizumi said the onus to prevent war remained on Iraq, accused of developing and hiding weapons of mass destruction, after a presentation Friday by chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix.

"(The report) shows that Iraqi cooperation is still not good enough. Suspicion remains high as before," he said.

Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi questioned the effectiveness of inspections and emphasized any decision to go to war required international support.

"Doubts about the effectiveness of inspections given Iraq's negative attitude have not changed," she said. "If the use of force becomes unavoidable, the adoption of a new (UN) resolution is desirable." *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Cyprus president is 25 years old

NICOSIA, Cyprus—Tassos Papadopoulos, a little-known lawyer of 25, was the shock appointment as the youngest minister in Cyprus' first independence government at the end of British colonial rule in 1959. Forty-four years and a lifetime of politics later, he is the fifth president of Cyprus. Archbishop Makarios, the island's first president, picked the London-trained lawyer for the first independence Cabinet because of Papadopoulos' involvement—until then kept secret—as a political leader of the Greek Cypriot EOKA underground that fought Britain for independence. *AP*

Lazy Indon civil servants

JAKARTA—Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri on Monday criticized civil servants who she said performed badly and were frequently absent from work. Her comment followed a proposal for a rise in civil servants' salaries to up to 10 million rupiah ($1,100) a month. "I want it too (the salary raise), but what about their performance and working spirit? I observe that they have trouble being present (at work)," Megawati told a meeting on the empowerment of the civil service. *AFP*

Indonesia has 1,000 more isles

JAKARTA—Indonesia, the world's largest archipelago, has 1,000 more islands than previously thought, an official said Monday. Analysis of satellite imaging data by the Aviation and Space Institute shows 18,108 islands compared to some 17,000 previously believed to exist, said the head of the institute, Mahdi Kartasasmita. Last December Indonesia lost two of those islands when the International Court of Justice granted ownership of Sipadan and Ligitan, off Borneo, to Malaysia. *AP*

Monster snowstorms

NEW YORK—New York and Boston braced Monday for the arrival of the same monster snowstorm that shut down airports and stilled traffic in Washington, Philadelphia and other cites in the eastern United States. The National Weather Service expected the storm to bury parts of the New York area under 60 cm (2 ft) of snow before moving on early Tuesday. The snowfall—one of the heaviest ever recorded in many cities—began before dawn Sunday, triggering a state of emergency in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and the US capital. *AP*

Swiss drug firm probed

BEIJING—The Swiss-based Roche pharmaceutical company is being investigated by authorities in China for allegedly spreading rumors about a mysterious pneumonia virus that has killed five and hospitalized 300, state media said Monday. The company allegedly held a press conference on Feb. 8 in the southern city of Guangzhou claiming that the illness spreading through the province was actually a potentially deadly bird flu and that an antibiotic drug they created, Dafei, was effective in treating it, the China Daily said. Panic spread as the rumor was passed around via mobile phone Short Messaging Service, local officials were quoted as saying. *AFP*

Former HK priest gets 4 years for sex abuse

HONG KONG—A former priest who was convicted of molesting a 15-year-old altar boy in a pedophilia-and-coverup case that rocked Hong Kong's Roman Catholic Church was sentenced Monday to 4 1/2 years in jail.

Judiciary spokesperson Jamie Or confirmed that District Court Judge Maggie Poon ordered Michael Lau, 42, jailed for 4 1/2 years for crimes committed in 1991 and 1992.

Or said she had no other details. Local TV and radio stations reported that Poon said in sentencing Lau that he had betrayed. the trust given to him as a minister of the church and caused the mental sufferings of the victim for the past 11 years.

Last month, Poon found Lau guilty of two counts of indecent assault, one of attempted sodomy and one of gross indecency. She ordered Lau to undergo psychiatric and psychological tests and to remain in jail while awaiting sentencing.

One of Lau's defense lawyers, Bernard Chung, said Monday that reports from the tests indicated that Lau did not suffer from any mental illness.

Chung said the defense team hadn't decided whether to appeal the case.

Lau, now an insurance agent, is the only person arrested so far in the child sex scandal that hit Hong Kong's Roman Catholic Church last year and mirrored a crisis that has ensnared the Church in the United States and elsewhere.

The Church defrocked Lau in 1995 after an internal investigation found that he twice molested the victim—an altar boy at the time.

The victim is now 27 and cannot be identified by name. He is said to have suffered from schizophrenia for several years after the abuse.

The Church never reported its findings to the police. But after more cases of alleged sexual abuse by priests who worked in Hong Kong emerged last year, Church officials said they had adopted a zero-tolerance policy and would be more cooperative with the authorities.

Bishop Joseph Zen, Roman Catholic leader in Hong Kong, said the Church would have a statement in a few days.

"We want to have a look at the judgment and then we will have a statement," Zen said. *AP*

Israel tanks blow up Hamas house in Gaza

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip—Israeli troops raided a Hamas stronghold in Gaza City Monday, killing two Palestinians and blowing up the house of a suspected bombmaker in retaliation for a deadly Hamas attack on an Israeli tank.

In all, 13 Palestinians were killed over 24 hours in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including six Hamas activists who died in a mysterious explosion on Sunday.

Raanan Gissin, an adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, said Hamas was escalating attacks and that Israel would retaliate. "There will be no immunity, there will be no sanctuary, not in Gaza ... not in any other place, and Hamas must take that into consideration," Gissin said.

The. Israeli daily Haaretz, citing unidentified Israeli military officials, said Israel was preparing for a major strike against members of the Hamas military wing in Gaza, but will not reoccupy the strip home to more than 1 million Palestinians.

The violence erupted amid new efforts to negotiate a ceasefire and get peace talks back on track. Israel and the Palestinians sent delegations to London on Monday to meet with members of the so-called Quartet of Mideast mediators—the United States, the European Union, the United Nations and Russia—who are trying to draft a plan to end 29 months of fighting and establish a Palestinian state.

Israeli officials did not rule out the possibility that the Israeli and Palestinian delegations would meet in London. It would be the first such meeting in many months. *AP*

A PALESTINIAN woman throws a stone at an Israeli tank during a clash with Israeli troops in the West Bank town of Nablus on Feb. 16. AP

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Across the NATION

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2 aliens, 21 others duped in scam

By Ansbert Joaquin, *PDI Central Luzon Desk*

OLONGAPO CITY—Twenty-three people, including two foreigners, filed separate complaints with the National Bureau of Investigation here against an investment company, claiming they were duped into putting up more than P13 million in investments with the firm.

Guenter Zillig, a German, and his wife, Elizabeth, of Barangay Sta. Rita here, said one Eliseo de la Fuente, who introduced himself as an employee of the Tibayan Group Investment Co. Inc. (TGICI), enticed them into investing P5 million in January 2001.

De la Fuente reportedly promised them a 3-percent interest a month for three years.

TGICI, which is reportedly owned by businessman Jesus Tibayan, holds office in Las Piñas City and maintains a branch at the Times Square building at the Subic Bay Freeport.

The INQUIRER tried to reach Tibayan in the TGICI's offices in Las Piñas and Subic but no one answered the offices' phones.

But in Tibayan's letter to his employees here on Jan. 27, he said: "Together with the recovery group, we are doing our best to facilitate the recovery of our company. It is noted that we have a 100-percent assurance of full recovery. Our obligations to our shareholders and creditors shall be settled."

In a Jan. 28 letter to "fellow personnel/negotiators," Tibayan wrote: "Some of our recovery plans are now starting to materialize in spite of the heavy unfavorable actions and pressures by some of our shareholders, including the media and other parties. (This is) creating severe damage to our personalities and companies and causing grave difficulties and delays on the processes being done by our recovery group."

The Zillig couple said they invested another P600,000 in July 2001 for another 3-percent interest monthly for six months.

In exchange for their investments, the couple said De la Fuente gave them 51 postdated checks and three certificates of shares.

Zillig said the checks, which represented their principal investments and interests, were later dishonored by the bank. He said De la Fuente had advised them not to deposit the checks for still unexplained reasons.

Another foreigner, Stephen Cryer, who invested P2.9 million and $40,000, and 21 other complainants, with investments ranging from P100,000 to P500,000 each, filed similar complaints after learning from newspapers about an NBI raid on Tibayan's main office in Las Piñas City on Feb. 7.

Acting on the victims' complaints, Joel Curameng, NBI Olongapo executive officer, sent his men to the TGICI branch here but found the office closed. The victims said the office had been closed since Thursday.

The Securities and Exchange Commission had issued a cease-and-desist order against TGICI in January after it found the company violated the Securities Regulation Code for selling securities to more than 19 people without prior registration with the SEC.

The SEC also said the firm was promising investors a fixed return on their investment.

The SEC's compliance and enforcement department said the group allegedly used numerous front corporations and partnerships to circumvent the 19-lending rule for investment-taking activities.

Cab falls into ravine; 7 killed

CEBU CITY—They were on their way to bury a loved one but they met an accident along the way.

Seven of them were killed while 15 others were injured on Sunday afternoon when the passenger multi-cab they were riding in fell into a 150-meter deep ravine in Barangay Malones, Dalaguete town, 85 kilometers south of Cebu City.

They were on the way to the Cawayan Public Cemetery, about four kilometers from Malones, for the funeral of Francisco Geslaga Jr., who died of heart attack last Thursday.

The group went to the cemetery ahead of the others because they had to bring snacks for the funeral-goers.

Among those killed in the accident were the parents of Francisco Jr. His mother, Maria, 70, died on the spot while his father, Francisco Sr., 74, passed away at the Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center (VSMMC) in Cebu City.

Also killed were Juliana Benabente, 64; Dionisio Sobedo, 54; Juanita Villacorta, 50; and Leoncio Enriscoso, 60, all from Malones; and Anastacia Adlawan, 50 of Argao town.

PO3 Fabio Fernandez, investigator of the Dalaguete police station, said Ronnie Blanco, driver of the multicab, was maneuvering a curb when he lost control of the vehicle.

Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

Gov orders probe of PNP officer

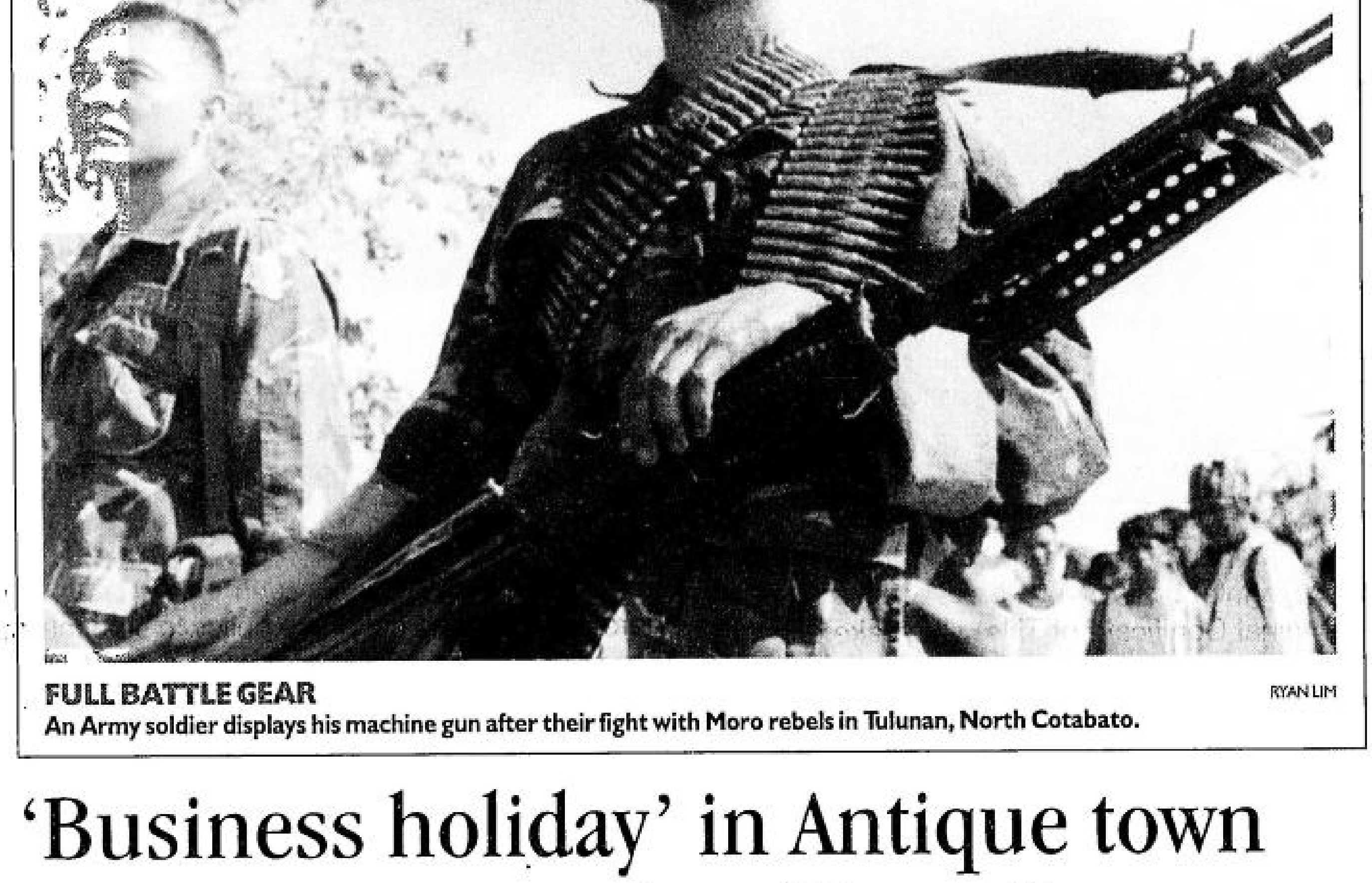
CAMP GEN. ALEJO SANTOS, Bulacan—Gov. Josefina de la Cruz on Monday ordered the investigation of a police chief in the province after the latter failed to prevent a town mayor and his men from beating up a town councilor earlier this month.

De la Cruz, in a speech during the Philippine National Police Day celebration in this camp, ordered Senior Supt. Felizardo Serapio Jr., provincial police director, to investigate and punish the police official.

The governor also declined to name the mayor and councilor involved in the incident pending the results of the police investigation.

"We should punish policemen who do not enforce the law to ensure peace and order. We should punish those who keep silent and turn a blind eye on abuses," she said.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk



FULL BATTLE GEAR
An Army soldier displays his machine gun after their fight with Moro rebels in Tulunan, North Cotabato.
RYAN LIM

'Business holiday' in Antique town protests proposed traffic ordinance

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Business ground to a halt in the capital town of San Jose, Antique yesterday after businessmen closed their shops in protest against a proposed traffic ordinance.

The one-day "business holiday" was joined in by around 98 percent of establishments at the San Jose Business Park, said lawyer Rolly Pedrina, chair of the San Jose Business Park Businessmen's Association Inc.

Chief Insp. Carlito Guion, San Jose police chief, said 90 percent of shops did not open. No strike-related violence was reported, he said.

Pedrina, also the chair of the Antique Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the strike was joined by around 178 entrepreneurs, mostly owners of stores selling dry goods, hardware and eateries. Several other businessmen from the poblacion joined the strike, he said.

Several public jeepneys did not ply their routes in sympathy with the businessmen.

The businessmen launched the strike after the San Jose municipal council implemented a month-long dry run of the proposed ordinance starting Feb. 11.

The ordinance prohibits the loading of cargo to public vehicles at the business park.

The cargo loading will only be allowed at the Trade Town, the new market, at Barangay Funda Dalipe, around two kilometers from the business park.

Pedrina said the ordinance is inimical to stall owners in the business park. "Our sales dropped from 30-50 percent (during the dry run) because it is difficult for customers to transport our goods . . .," Pedrina told INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

He said they attended the public hearing of the committee on public order and safety of the municipal council last November to voice out their opposition.

They also sent a letter to the municipal council on Feb. 11, opposing the dry run.

San Jose Vice Mayor Rony Molina said the proposed ordinance aims to improve the flow of traffic in the poblacion as the vehicles loading cargo at the business park often cause traffic congestion.

"This (proposed ordinance) is meant to restore order," he said in a telephone interview.

Molina said they could not stop the dry run but would consider the proposal of the businessmen. "Let us look at it from the perspective of all parties concerned and not only of a group or sector," he said.

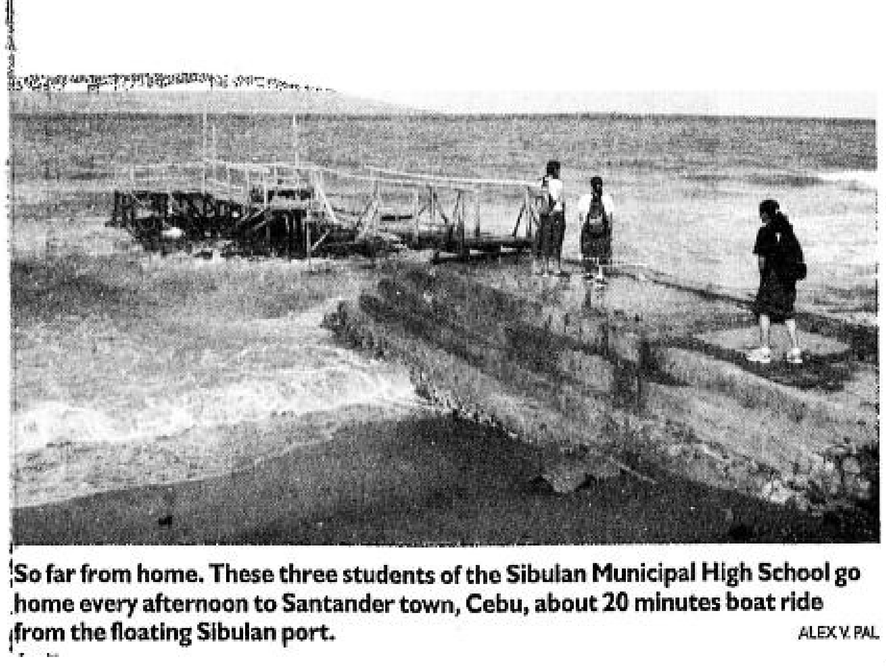
The dry run was necessary to "open the proposed ordinance to public scrutiny and to see the advantages and disadvantages."

But he said they are open to dialogue with the businessmen to thresh out their concerns.

Pedrina said there is no need to amend the existing traffic ordinance. "We only need to strictly enforce the existing traffic regulations," he said.

They will open their shops today but will pursue legal actions if the ordinance is passed, he warned.

Town mayor appeals for development of own port



So far from home. These three students of the Sibulan Municipal High School go home every afternoon to Santander town, Cebu, about 20 minutes boat ride from the floating Sibulan port.
ALEX V. PAL

By Alex V. Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—Sibulan town Mayor Antonio Renacia has appealed to the municipal council to allow the town to develop its own port without support from the Philippine Ports Authority so it could keep over 40 hectares of prime real estate.

Renacia said he had talked with Sibulan Councilor Gil Genaro Concepcion, the council's committee chair on public utilities, to ask him to convince the municipal council to "take the second option" in the development of the Sibulan port.

The second option, Renacia explained, would be for the local government to develop its own port through a P5- million loan from the Land Bank of the Philippines.

The other option is for the PPA to develop the port through its own funds.

But Renacia said the council had earlier backed out of the PPA proposal after they learned that the PPA wanted them to declare the area as a port zone.

This would mean, Renacia said, that the town would lose its control over 40 hectares of prime land.

The mayor said he was surprised to learn last week that the council had reversed its stand on allowing the local government to develop its own port

Now, he added, the council wants the PPA to come in and develop the Sibulan port.

"I heard the council changed its mind after hearing that the PPA has exclusive authority to manage any port, even if the LGU constructed it," Renacia said.

Renacia said the PPA had actually said that the fears of the town council were unfounded because they allowed the local governments to develop and manage its own port for as long as certain standards were met.

ROUNDUP

Infant killed in fire

DUMAGUETE CITY—A ten-minute fire claimed the life of a three-month old infant in Purok 6, Barangay Bantayan, here on Thursday afternoon. Maritoni Aure died from third-degree burns. Her brother Elmer, 5, suffered second-degree burns after he accidentally burned their nipa house while playing with matches. Fire Investigator Richard Calunod said firemen succeeded in stopping the fire before it could spread to neighboring houses. He said the children's mother, Mary Aure, was not around when the fire broke out as she had to fetch her other children from school.

Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau

2 NPA rebels nabbed

SILAGO, Southern Leyte—The police arrested two suspected communist rebels in this remote town last Feb. 6. Abraham Mancera, 44, and Pediarante del Rosario, 18, both natives of Cebu allegedly belonged to the New People's Army's Evelyn Dublin Command operating in Leyte. Initial police report showed that the residents tipped off the police about the two suspicious looking men who were buying goods at the town market. Mancera and Pediarante were immediately brought to nearby Hinunangan Police Station purportedly to avoid any rescue attempt.

Jani Arnaiz, PDI Visayas Bureau

Condominium project

DAVAO CITY—A condominium will soon rise inside the regional police command at Camp Catitipan here. The multi-million peso townhouse, considered to be the first of its kind in Southern Mindanao, is meant for the police commissioned officers, some of whom are still occupying the dilapidated Bachelor Officer's Quarters. Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. led the groundbreaking ceremony on Thursday during the 12th PNP founding anniversary to signal the construction of the four-story condominium. Chief Insp. Warlito Tampo, regional police spokesperson, said the construction might start second quarter of the year as there is already an initial P5-million allocation from the PNP budget.

Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Wanted man falls

DAVAO CITY—One of Southern Mindanao's most wanted persons was arrested in Pantukan, Compostela Valley on Saturday morning. Police identified the suspect as Mabini Macusang, a resident of Tarragona, Davao Oriental, who had a P60,000-bounty on his head. He was wanted for illegal possession of banned drugs.

Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Nur men blamed

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Suspected followers of jailed Moro leader Nur Misuari were being blamed for the abduction of at least three healers and peddlers of herbal remedies in Barangay Silangkan in Parang, Sulu on Wednesday. "Silangkan is the last barangay going towards Bud Tumatangis, and this place is identified with the Misuari group," Col. Alexander Aleo, commander of the Army's 104th Infantry Brigade said in confirming police suspicions that the armed men did not belong to the Abu Sayyaf. Two of the victims, identified as Leonardo Machion and Eduardo Mistal, all of Jolo town, managed to escape. Supt. Arip Baanan, Sulu police director, told the INQUIRER that Armando Gigante, the third victim, was freed on Thursday evening after police exerted pressure on the armed group while local officials took charge of the negotiations.

Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Text power vs rebels

LEGAZPI CITY—"Fight insurgency through your fingertips." Southern Luzon Command chief Major Gen. Roy Kyamkoto urged the public to help curb the liquidations and other atrocities allegedly committed by the New People's Army in Southern Luzon. "The use of state-of-the-art telecommunications through text messaging will be of big help in tipping off the rebels presence in your locality to prevent them from coming in, thus, they (NPA) will be isolated and/or disorganized," Kyamko said in a statement. He urged the public to call up cellphone number 09195362863 for Masbate, Sorsogon and Albay provinces. *Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Promotion hit

LUCENA CITY—The partylist Bayan Muna assailed President Macapagal-Arroyo's promotion of the top Army commander in Mindoro who has long been suspected of committing widespread human rights violations in the island. "The promotion of the notorious (Col. Jovito) Palparan is an affront to the numerous victims who are still seeking justice," Robert de Castro, Bayan Muna deputy secretary general, told the INQUIRER in a statement. Palparan, commanding officer of the 204th Army Brigade in Mindoro Oriental, was recently promoted by President Macapagal-Arroyo to Brigadier General in recognition of his successful anti-insurgency campaigns in Mindoro. De Castro said Bayan Muna, along with its allied organizations, is prepared to exhaust all possible means to block the promotion of Palparan at the Commission on Appointments. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

AN OPEN LETTER TO
MADAME PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

YOUR EXCELLENCY, IN THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST, WE URGENTLY APPEAL FOR YOUR ALL-OUT SUPPORT IN OUR FIGHT AGAINST LANDGRABBING SYNDICATES AND CORRUPT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TARGETING LEGITIMATE LANDOWNERS AND HOMEOWNERS, INCLUDING URBAN POOR FAMILIES — AND GOVERNMENT ITSELF!

THE MASSIVE MAYSILO ESTATE LAND TITLING ANOMALIES were once described by the late Senate President and Chief Justice Marcelo B. Fernan as "THE MOTHER OF ALL LAND TITLING SCAMS IN THIS COUNTRY." The integrity and stability of the Torrens system of land title registration in Caloocan City and Malabon combined, and a vital portion of Quezon City, is about to COLLAPSE!

Among the areas being gobbled up by a so-called Group of April 19, 1917 are residential, commercial and industrial sites, buildings and public structures such as the Bonifacio Monument; private and public schools and hospital compounds, such as the University of the East, Manila Central University and Hospital; church and urban poor communities and subdivisions; public and private markets and shops, the Manila Railway Company compound, and highways such as portions of EDSA, the McArthur Highway, Sangandaan along EDSA up to Balintawak Cloverleaf and portions of the North Diversion Road, 6th Avenue near the Bonifacio Ave., and areas near the Tullahan River. The Department of Justice Report listed 109 National Government properties some of which were earlier expropriated for urban poor housing projects and highway widening projects, and 19 Caloocan City and Malabon City Hall properties, including its Hall of Justice, police and fire departments, which areas are being overlapped or usurped through dubiously issued titles.

HERE ARE THE FACTS

The Department of Justice and the Senate of the Philippines in their Official Reports submitted, respectively, in 1997 and 1998, concluded:

- Original Certificate of Title (OCT) No. 994 issued or registered on May 3, 1917 is the ONLY TRUE, CORRECT AND GENUINE ORIGINAL CERTIFICATE OF TITLE NO. 994 in the old Maysilo Estate. OCT 994 covered 1,342 hectares.

The date on the face of OCT 994 itself is vital:

"RECEIVED FOR TRANSCRIPTION AT THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTER OF DEEDS for the Province of Rizal this THIRD DAY OF MAY NINETEEN HUNDRED QND SEVENTEEN at 7:30 a.m. (Illegible) Register of Deeds"

Under the law enforced when OCT 994 was issued, "the entry made by the register of deeds in this book (Registration Book) in such case shall be the original certificate of title and shall be signed by him and sealed with the seal of the court" and "this certificate (Original Certificate of Title) shall take effect upon the date of transcription of the decree (of registration)" Under Supreme Court jurisprudence "the certificate of title is the transcript of the decree of registration of deeds in the registry." Therefore, pursuant to law and jurisprudence, the "3rd day of May, nineteen hundred and seventeen" represents the effective or actual date of issuance of OCT 994.

- On behalf of the National Government, the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) intervened in the consolidated cases involving the same issue before the Supreme Court, to prove that OCT No. 994 issued or registered on May 3, 1917 is the true, correct and genuine OCT No. 994, and that OCT 994 allegedly issued or registered on April 19, 1917 is "NON-EXISTENT, A FABRICATION" by the Caloocan City Deputy Registrar of Deeds Norberto Vasquez in connivance with Registrar of Deeds Yolanda Alfonso.
- Both Alfonso and Vasquez were investigated administratively and eventually dismissed from government service for having "acted maliciously, fraudulently and in bad faith." They had issued a number of Maysilo Estate transfer certificates of title (TCTs) wherein they certified that these titles originated from an OCT 994 issued or registered on April 19, 1917, knowing fully well that the correct date of registration was May 3, 1917.

The Senate Report stated: ". . .THE PROPERTY OWNERS . . . SUFFERED GREAT DAMAGE FOR WHICH PARTIES RESPONSIBLE FOR IT, INCLUDING (Registrar of Deeds Yolanda) ALFONSO (and Deputy Registrar Norberto Vasquez) SHOULD BE HELD TO ACCOUNT." What they did was not "minor and simple inadvertence."

- On the petition of the Republic of the Philippines represented by the OSG, the Caloocan Regional Trial Court Branch 122 presided by Judge Remigio Zari ordered the nullification of Lilia Sevilla's 22 fraudulent titles covering portions of the Maysilo Estate. All these titles were allegedly derived from an OCT 994 registered on APRIL 19, 1917.

The Court ruled: "Clear and substantial evidence has proved that there is only one OCT 994 and the same was issued and registered on MAY 3, 1917. Thus, the Court concluded: "Vicious fraud was maliciously done" to other courts, including the Supreme Court. In a number of cases which they decided on the Maysilo Estate tiling anomalies, these Courts were misled into believing that there were two Original Certificates of Title No. 994, one issued on May 3, 1917 and another issued on April 19, 1917. They decided on the basis of a NON-EXISTING OCT NO. 994 ALLEGEDLY REGISTERED ON APRIL 19, 1917.

- **On October 17, 2002, the Court of Appeals 14th Division chaired by Associate Justice Aquino in a unanimous decision in Phil-Ville Development & Housing Corporation vs. Maximo Bonifacio, et al., concluded: "Original Certificate of Title No. 994 allegedly issued on April 19, 1917 is A FAKE OR SPURIOUS DOCUMENT WHICH WAS GENERATED ON THE BASIS OF ERRONEOUS OR FALSIFIED CERTIFICATES OF DEEDS issued by former Deputy Registrar of Deeds Norberto Vasquez, in connivance with Registrar of Deeds Yolanda Alfonso. THERE WAS NO GENUINE OCT NO. 994 ISSUED ON APRIL 19, 1917. To invoke *MWSS* and *Heirs of Gonzaga* and *Mascarinas* in upholding the validity and primacy of OCT No. 994 purportedly issued on April 19, 1917 OVER THE GENUINE OCT NO. 994 LAWFULLY ISSUED ON MAY 3, 1917 is SIMPLY ABSURD! THAT WOULD BE TO ACCORD LEGITIMACY TO A FALSIFIED TITLE AND TO NULLIFY A GENUINE ONE."**

In the earlier cases of MWSS, Gonzaga and Mascarinas, the Supreme Court was misled into believing that there were two versions of OCT 994 when in fact there is ONLY ONE OCT 994 AND IT WAS REGISTERED ON MAY 3, 1917. The original OCT 994 is being kept in the LRA vault for safekeeping. To insist that OCT 993 was registered on April 19, 1917 would definitely constitute a TRAVESTY OF JUSTICE.

- TO THIS DAY, HOWEVER, a CALOOCAN COURT HAS CONTINUED TO ORDER THE ISSUANCE OF CLEARLY ILLEGAL AND FRAUDULENT TITLES. WITH MORE AND MORE FRAUDULENT TITLES BEING ISSUED OVERLAPPING THEIR TITLES TO THEIR OWN PROPERTIES, THE LANDOWNERS AND HOMEOWNERS ARE BACK TO WHERE THEY STARTED — BEING OVERWHELMED BY A CONTINUING FLOOD OF FAKE TITLES!
- On December 16, 1998, while the Caloocan registry of deeds was under a Land Registration Authority red-alert against issuing dubious Maysilo Estate titles, the registry issued TWENTY-TWO titles to Reynaldo D. Calimbas which overlapped Maysilo Estate previously issued titles to properties more than half a century ago. The new titles were certified to be directly derived from OCT No. 994 allegedly registered on April 19, 1917. Many of the titles are being peddled to unsuspecting public.

Only recently, Caloocan City Registrar of Deeds Regulo Coloma issued 10 new transfer certificates of title again allegedly originating from "mother title" OCT No. 994 registered on April 19, 1917. The new titles were in the names of alleged heirs of Spanish lady Maria de la Concepcion Vidal. The "heirs" were earlier found to be BOGUS HEIRS by the Verification Committee of the then Land Registration Commission which finding is part of the DOJ and Senate Reports.

Despite the Court of Appeals decision in the Phil-Ville v. Bonifacio et al. which had already become final and executory where the Caloocan registry of deeds was one of the respondents, Coloma still issued a new title in the name of Eleuteria Rivera over the same property litigated in the Phil-Ville case. Coloma defied standing Land Registration Authority Circular No. 97-11 prohibiting the issuance by the registrar of deeds and his deputy of new titles that overlap earlier titles or otherwise result in the issuance of fraudulent titles. Earlier, Coloma himself had earlier also sent a query to LRA Administrator Bernardo Ulep about the office stand on the Maysilo titling irregularities investigated by the Senate and the DOJ. In reply, Ulep categorically stated there is no backing out of the policy to stop the issuance of fraudulent Maysilo titltes "BEING IN ACCORD WITH LRA'S MANDATE TO PROTECT THE INTEGRITY AND STABILITY OF THE TORRENS SYSTEM."

COLOMA, THEREFORE, OPENLY DEFIES THE FINDINGS, DIRECTIVES AND STANDING POLICIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE UNDER WHICH THE LAND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY IS FUNCTIONING, AND THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINESE WHICH PINPOINTED THE MAYSILO ESTATE TITLING ANOMALIES.

In view of the SERIOUSNESS AND URGENCY of the LANDGRABBING PROBLEMS, we make this URGENT APPEAL to Your EXCELLENCY to:

- Save the Torrens System of Land Title Registration!
  The continuing assault on the system adversely affects the national economy.
- Protect the private sector of society, particularly in the areas specified at the outset of this appeal,
- Protect the MULTI-BILLION-PESO WORTH OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTIES FROM LANDGRABBERS.
- ORDER THE INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF CORRUPT PUBLIC OFFICIALS, SUCH AS JUDGES AND REGISTRARS OF DEEDS, AND OFFICIALS OF OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICES POSSIBLY IN CAHOOTS WITH SYNDICATES.
- Order the immediate implementation of the recommendations of the Department of Justice and the Senate which your Excellency signed in 1998

Among such recommendations were that PRACTICING LAWYERS and MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY (INCUMBENT OR RETIRED) found to be involved in land titling irregularities be disbarred from law practice or dismissed from government service; and for the Office of the Solicitor General to intervene in land disputes before the courts involving fake titles, duplication of titles or similar anomalies in private and government properties.

- Direct the Department of Justice and the Land Registration Authority to STRICTLY IMPLEMENT existing circulars to all registries of deeds to desist from issuing titles, even if ordered by the courts, that clearly overlap previous titles issued to other persons covering the same properties.
- Work closely with the Supreme Court for the issuance of a similar directive to trial courts to desist from ordering the registry of deeds to issue titles without complying with the basic requirements of such issuances, such as presentation of the duplicate copy of owner's title, tax declarations and payment of real estate taxes and other documents for approval by the LRA.

MADAME PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO:

UPHOLD the Group of May 3, 1917 vs. the Group of April 19, 1917:
SUPPORT THE BATTLE OF GOOD VS. EVIL to preserve the integrity and stability of the Torrens system of land title registration in this country.

— THE GROUP OF MAY 3, 1917

PAID ADVT.

Maid returns home in casket from Singapore

ZAMBOANGA CITY—On Feb. 10, Juanita Lajot sent money to her family in Ipil in Zamboanga Sibugay for the medicine of her ailing mother and for the construction of a new house.

Six days later, members of the family got the biggest surprise of their lives when news reached them that Juanita had died in Singapore.

Disbelief gripped the family, especially when they were told that their youngest sibling apparently committed suicide.

On Feb. 16, Juanita's casket, brought in by Philippine Airlines from the island-state, was turned over to her brother Hospicio and sisters Eliza Rosel and Asuncion Managbanag.

A certificate of Registration of Death from the Center for Forensic Medicine in Singapore was also handed to them.

"It's painful," Hospicio said as he received the casket from airport officials.

Based on her death records, Juanita's body bore multiple injuries when found at the foot of the Paterson Towers in Singapore.

She had been staying there the past two months working for Australian Robert Raymond Fleming although she had been working in Singapore for about seven years already.

A relative, who also works in Singapore, corroborated the suicide angle. She told Hospicio that Juanita showed signs of suicidal tendencies.

But the family had rejected the report, urging authorities should look deeper. They suspected that Juanita was a victim of foul play.

"My sister was not deranged. Even her agents said she was happy, so there was no reason for her to kill herself," Hospicio said.

On the day her sister reportedly committed suicide, Juanita called up and informed them she was sending money, Eliza pointed out.

"She was in high spirits so we could not believe she committed suicide," Eliza said.

Another puzzle to the family was that the Philippine Embassy in Singapore was not informed of Juanita's death. Neither did the Overseas Workers Welfare Office know anything about Juanita's death.

Because of this, Marcos, another brother of the victim, said the family approached the National Bureau of Investigation to perform an autopsy.

"The NBI told me that their medico-legal would be coming back on March yet. They told us we could proceed with burying her body and exhume it later on when the medico-legal is already available," Marcos said. *Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Camarines folk denounce harassment

By Juan Escandor Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUPI, Camarines Sur—One by one, the Borromeo clan members in Barangay Del Carmen in this town were roused from their sleep in the early morning of Feb. 10 by masked armed men.

They identified the men as members of the 9th Infantry Brigade (Separate), who ransacked their belongings, allegedly in search of guns and bullets.

Capt. Roel Rafer, assistant spokesperson of the 9th IB (Separate) based in Pili, Camarines Sur, denied the allegations.

No report of a military operation has been reported on Feb. 10 and the troops under the 9th IB were deployed near Naga City and the Abo Farm in Tigaon, he said yesterday.

Loreta, Dionisio, Crispina and Emelita, all members of the Borromeo clan, narrated the harassment they suffered when the gunmen sprang a surprise search in their houses.

The victims alleged that the men barged into their houses and searched every corner without showing any warrants. The intruders suspected them of being rebel sympathizers, took their belongings and threatened to arrest them, they said.

They alleged that the men, who terrorized them, were members of the 9th IB, a special group of counterinsurgency combatants from the Army and composed mostly of Bicolano soldiers.

They said they were able to identify one member of the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) as Joseph, who acted as guide, and the unit of the soldiers. Barangay police chief Andres Borromeo later confirmed the identity of the the militiaman.

But Rafer said the brigade always responded to formal complaints regarding military abuses and was open to a formal investigation if there are witnesses to prove the allegations.

He said they would not hesitate to impose disciplinary action if soldiers under the brigade are found guilty after an impartial investigation.

Rafer said it was unjust to accuse the Army of serious charges without sworn statements, especially that the suspected perpetrators were masked.

He said that on the date the Borromeos alleged that they were harassed, the troops under the brigade were assigned to secure the areas near the vicinity visited by Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes.

Reyes went to Naga to inaugurate the first Regional Area Coordinating Center in Bicol, a counterinsurgency center of the government, and Abo Farm of the Fuentebellas in Tigaon, Camarines Sur, on Feb. 11.

The alleged harassment started at about 4:30 a.m., when Crispina was awakened by knocks on the door. When she opened it, she saw armed men with high-powered rifles poked through the window.

The gunmen forced their way inside after she told them that only her 15-year-old and year-old children were in the house, she said.

Suspecting that they were soldiers, Crispina asked if the men had a search warrant. But she was just told to keep quiet.

She said the men searched their house for about 15 minutes and asked her where she kept the guns and bullets.

After finding no guns or bullets, the men left without saying a word and proceeded to the house of couple Dioscoro and Loreta and the other members of the clan.

Long gray line gets thinner at PMA homecoming

By Frank Cimatu and Robert Abaño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—The long gray line of the Philippine Military Academy is getting thinner at the end. During Sunday's alumni parade at the Borromeo Field here, six flag bearers had no alumnus standing behind them. No representatives of PMA Classes of 1935, 1936, 1937, 1941, 1945 and 1954 were around to join the homecoming.

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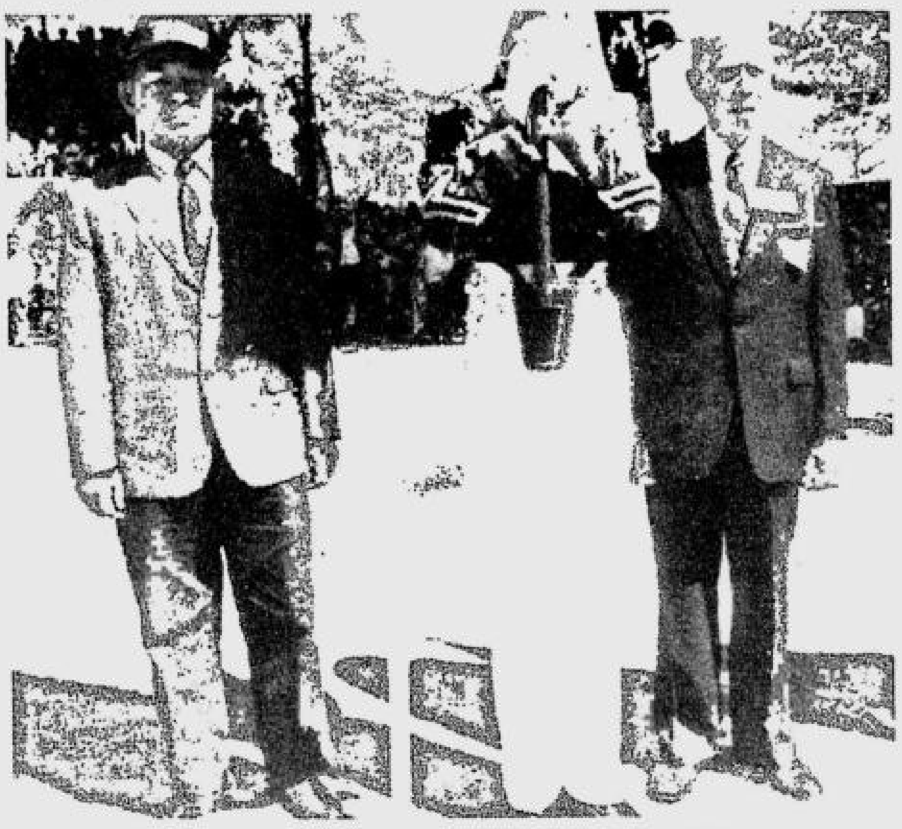
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Little girl with leukemia appeals for help

By Lourma P. Plenos
PDI Visayas Bureau

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Sacrifice

The news shocked the entire Jularbal household. "We didn't expect Claire to get this kind of disease. Our lively and energetic Claire."

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Claire Juralbal with her father Carlito in the hospital.
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Maid returns home in casket from Singapore

ZAMBOANGA CITY—On Feb. 10, Juanita Lajot sent money to her family in Ipil in Zamboanga Sibugay for the medicine of her ailing mother and for the construction of a new house.

Six days later, members of the family got the biggest surprise of their lives when news reached them that Juanita had died in Singapore.

Disbelief gripped the family, especially when they were told that their youngest sibling apparently committed suicide.

On Feb. 16, Juanita's casket, brought in by Philippine Airlines from the island-state, was turned over to her brother Hospicio and sisters Eliza Rosel and Asuncion Managbanag.

A certificate of Registration of Death from the Center for Forensic Medicine in Singapore was also handed to them.

"It's painful," Hospicio said as he received the casket from airport officials.

Based on her death records, Juanita's body bore multiple injuries when found at the foot of the Paterson Towers in Singapore.

She had been staying there the past two months working for Australian Robert Raymond Fleming although she had been working in Singapore for about seven years already.

A relative, who also works in Singapore, corroborated the suicide angle. She told Hospicio that Juanita showed signs of suicidal tendencies.

But the family had rejected the report, urging authorities should look deeper. They suspected that Juanita was a victim of foul play.

"My sister was not deranged. Even her agents said she was happy, so there was no reason for her to kill herself," Hospicio said.

On the day her sister reportedly committed suicide, Juanita called up and informed them she was sending money, Eliza pointed out.

"She was in high spirits so we could not believe she committed suicide," Eliza said.

Another puzzle to the family was that the Philippine Embassy in Singapore was not informed of Juanita's death. Neither did the Overseas Workers Welfare Office know anything about Juanita's death.

Because of this, Marcos, another brother of the victim, said the family approached the National Bureau of Investigation to perform an autopsy.

"The NBI told me that their medico-legal would be coming back on March yet. They told us we could proceed with burying her body and exhume it later on when the medico-legal is already available," Marcos said. *Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Camarines folk denounce harassment

By Juan Escandor Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUPI, Camarines Sur—One by one, the Borromeo clan members in Barangay Del Carmen in this town were roused from their sleep in the early morning of Feb. 10 by masked armed men.

They identified the men as members of the 9th Infantry Brigade (Separate), who ransacked their belongings, allegedly in search of guns and bullets.

Capt. Roel Rafer, assistant spokesperson of the 9th IB (Separate) based in Pili, Camarines Sur, denied the allegations.

No report of a military operation has been reported on Feb. 10 and the troops under the 9th IB were deployed near Naga City and the Abo Farm in Tigaon, he said yesterday.

Loreta, Dionisio, Crispina and Emelita, all members of the Borromeo clan, narrated the harassment they suffered when the gunmen sprang a surprise search in their houses.

The victims alleged that the men barged into their houses and searched every corner without showing any warrants. The intruders suspected them of being rebel sympathizers, took their belongings and threatened to arrest them, they said.

They alleged that the men, who terrorized them, were members of the 9th IB, a special group of counterinsurgency combatants from the Army and composed mostly of Bicolano soldiers.

They said they were able to identify one member of the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) as Joseph, who acted as guide, and the unit of the soldiers. Barangay police chief Andres Borromeo later confirmed the identity of the the militiaman.

But Rafer said the brigade always responded to formal complaints regarding military abuses and was open to a formal investigation if there are witnesses to prove the allegations.

He said they would not hesitate to impose disciplinary action if soldiers under the brigade are found guilty after an impartial investigation.

Rafer said it was unjust to accuse the Army of serious charges without sworn statements, especially that the suspected perpetrators were masked.

He said that on the date the Borromeos alleged that they were harassed, the troops under the brigade were assigned to secure the areas near the vicinity visited by Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes.

Reyes went to Naga to inaugurate the first Regional Area Coordinating Center in Bicol, a counterinsurgency center of the government, and Abo Farm of the Fuentebellas in Tigaon, Camarines Sur, on Feb. 11.

The alleged harassment started at about 4:30 a.m., when Crispina was awakened by knocks on the door. When she opened it, she saw armed men with high-powered rifles poked through the window.

The gunmen forced their way inside after she told them that only her 15-year-old and year-old children were in the house, she said.

Suspecting that they were soldiers, Crispina asked if the men had a search warrant. But she was just told to keep quiet.

She said the men searched their house for about 15 minutes and asked her where she kept the guns and bullets.

After finding no guns or bullets, the men left without saying a word and proceeded to the house of couple Dioscoro and Loreta and the other members of the clan.

Long gray line gets thinner at PMA homecoming

By Frank Cimatu and Robert Abaño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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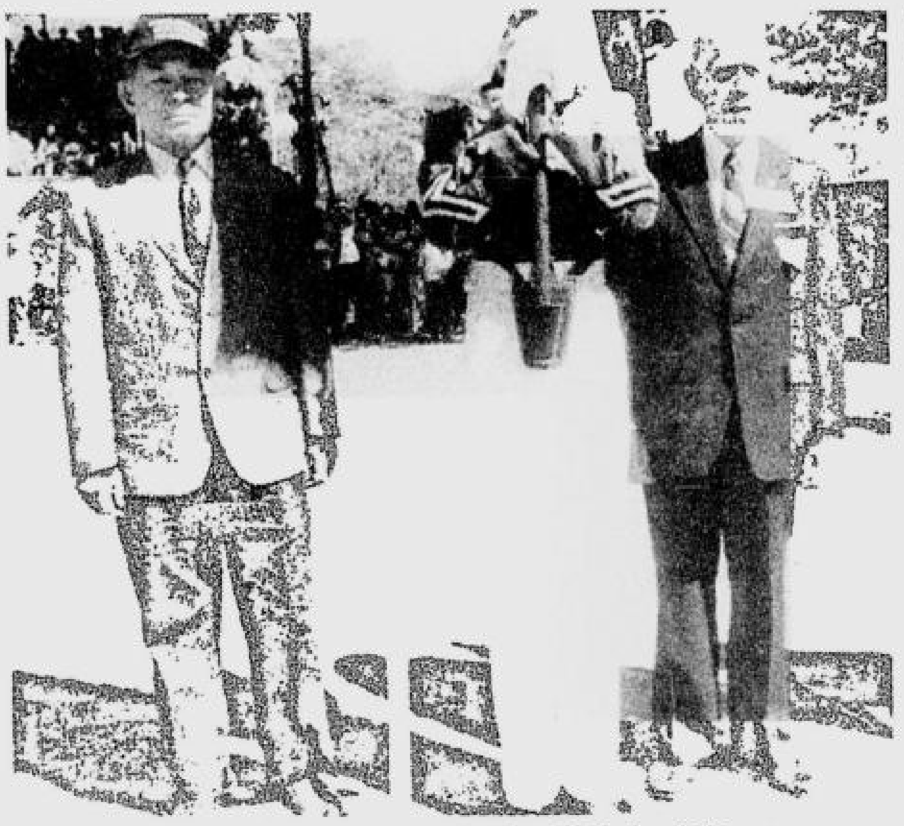

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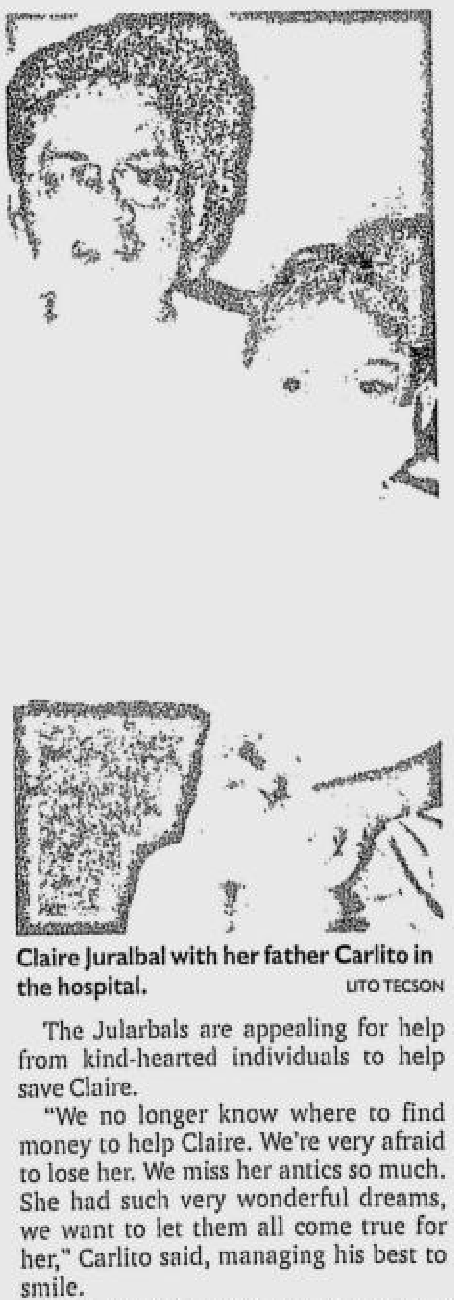

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ILOCOS SAND DUNES

Residents develop desert to attract local tourists

By Cristina Arzadon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Second of three parts

LAOAG CITY—The sand dunes in the seaside village of Calayab here have been home to a posh resort hotel sitting on a 774,680-square-meter lot that was acquired by the government through a special patent in 1980.

SPECIAL REPORT

The once government-owned Fort Ilocandia Resort and Casino Complex was ordered built by the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos in 1983 in time for the grand wedding of his youngest daughter Irene to businessman Gregorio Araneta III.

Formerly run by the Philippine Tourism Authority, the 271-room hotel was privatized after the 1986 People Power revolution. It was first bought and managed until the early 1990s by Polar Peak Philippines, a Taiwan-based consortium.

At one point, Waterfront Hotel, owned by business tycoon William Gatchalian, came in and managed it until a Hong Kong-based investor bought the property and took over the hotel operations in 2001.

At present, Fort Ilocandia Property Holdings and Development Corp., through Chinese investor Jack Lam, runs the hotel, including the Fort Ilocandia Golf and Country Club.

Room rates

With accommodation rates ranging from P4,000 to P6,000 a day and amenities that only the well-heeled can afford, the hotel primarily targets foreign clients and local visitors in the upper scale of the tourism market.

Sitting next to the hotel is a patch of commercial structures owned and built by local residents, ranging from thatched-roof cottages, sing-along bars and cocktail lounge to restaurants that cater mostly to beach-goers on a tight budget.

Enterprising residents started setting up shanties-turned-eateries on what used to be mounds of desert to cater to construction workers employed by the government to build the hotel in the early 1980s.

At the time the government was building the structure, Calayab residents were similarly setting up kitchenettes to feed workers employed in the hotel construction.

"This area used to be a vast tract of barren land. Our forefathers who were the original residents here toiled to develop this desert into what it is right now," said Fredalyn Buyat, a long-time Calayab resident and one of the Calayab beach resort operators.

"Our elders saw the need to put up these eateries because the area was kilometers away from the nearest store. Business was brisk because most workers, including construction supervisors, went to our establishments," Buyat said.

From a stretch of rolling desert hills, residents started investing resources to level the land and grow trees before finally building the structures for commercial purposes in 1987.

Leaseholders

Buyat is now one of 10 foreshore lease agreement holders issued by the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office since 1992. The leaseholders all belong to the D'Sierto Beach Owners Association that Buyat leads.

In 1992, association members applied for individual foreshore lease agreements for a five-hectare public land with the Bureau of Lands to legalize their occupancy of the beachfront.

They were allowed to occupy the southern foreshore area adjacent to the land owned by Fort Ilocandia Resort and Casino upon the hotel's decision to waive its right to occupy or develop the property.

The hotel management under its previous owner, Polar Peak, consequently issued the notice of waiver in 1992 as a requirement in the granting of foreshore lease agreement to the residents.

The waiver-letter also indicated that the hotel management was only interested in applying for a separate eight-hectare foreshore land at the opposite end of the beachfront.

From 1992 to 1998, the 10 foreshore leaseholders were issued provisional permits, renewable every year, from the Cenro to occupy the beachfront. They also applied for permits to operate their establishments on the strength of annual taxes being paid to the city government in the form of business and building occupancy permits and land taxes from 1992 to 2002.

Stopped

Beginning 1998, the Cenro stopped the issuance of provisional permits but continued receiving the leaseholders' payments in 1999 until 2001.

While no provisional permit was issued in 1998, the Cenro issued a certification in 1999 that the foreshoreland occupied by the association members fell under the classified alienable and disposable land and could be titled.

Meanwhile, other residents took off from where their forefathers had left since 1992.

From several picnic huts, they put up kitchenettes, sing-along bars and concrete cottages. Other beach operators followed suit when they expanded their businesses.

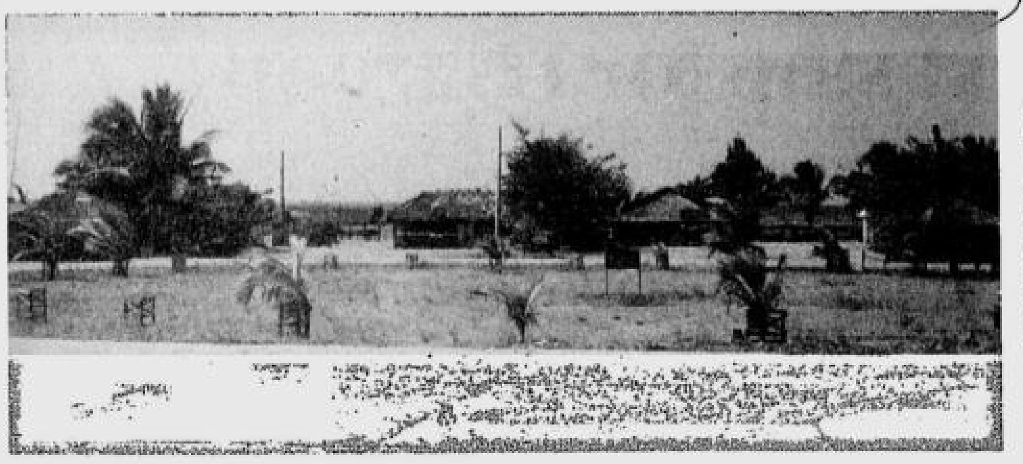
All leaseholders initially started with meager investments to support their operations that grew through the years. Their accumulated investments now run from P200,000 to P2 million.

Georgina Mohammed used to own a souvenir shop in La Union until she decided to join her relatives here and set up her own business in 1996.

"Friends encouraged us to invest because they saw the increasing number of tourists that flock to the city," Mohammed said.

She operates a two-story concrete cottage and picnic sheds while her mother manages an eatery.

"We never run out of customers. Even hotel clients check in with us and eat their food here. They just go to the hotel at night to play at the casino," Mohammed said. *(Tomorrow: The battle rages)*



THE SITE of local business establishments along Calayab beach is now deserted following a closure order on the firms imposed by the city government.

The First University for Women in Asia founded by Asians

THE PHILIPPINE WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY

and its Affiliate Schools for Men and Women

Pres. GMA Inducts Dr. Amelou Benitez-Reyes PWU President

Messages

I join the officials, faculty, students and friends of the Philippine Women's University and its Affiliate Schools in congratulating Dr. Amelou Benitez Reyes on her formal installation as the 8th President of the University.

Under the able leadership of Dr. Amelou Benitez Reyes, I am confident that the institution will succeed more in its noble aims to improve our society.

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President of the Philippines

• • •

My greetings and congratu-lations to the Philippine Women University on the appointment of its eighth University President, Dr. Amelia Lourdes Benitez Reyes.

I am confident that she will preserve the founders' legacy of learning, personal growth and community involvement.

Teofisto T. Guingona, Jr.
Vice-President of the Philippines

• • •

I appreciate very much your inviting me as one of your special guests and witnesses during your investiture. Regrettably, I am constrained to decline your request because of a prior and equally important official engagement.

Nonetheless, I congratulate you on your installation as President of the PWU, and assure you of my spiritual presence and my prayers for your success and more blessings.

Hilario G. Davide, Jr.
Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

• • •

We at the Department of Education extend our congratulations to Dr. Amelia Lourdes Benitez Reyes for her appointment as the 8th President of the Philippine Women's University and its Affiliate Schools for Men and Women! We also congratulate Dr. Reyes for being the fourth in the line of PWU alumnae Presidents who served their Alma Mater with the passion of a Filipino educator.

We believe that, under her stewardship, Dr. Reyes will bring honor and pride to the Philippine Women's University.

Edilberto C. De Jesus
Secretary of Education

• • •

Our congratulations to Dr. Amelia Lourdes Benitez Reyes on her installation as President of the Philippine Women's University.

We are confident that through the leadership of Dr. Reyes, this University will remain steadfast in her commitment to deliver quality and excellent education to produce professionals who are morally upright, competent, service-oriented, principled and productive.

Ester A. Garcia
Chair, CHED

• • •

In behalf of TESDA, I congratulate Dr. Amelia Lourdes Benitez Reyes on her appointment as the new president of the Philippine Women's University.

I wish that PWU will maintain its stature as an institution of higher learning that provides quality education and produces outstanding graduates in different disciplines.

Dante V. Liban
Director General, TESDA

• • •

My profoundest greetings and felicitations to Dr. Amelia Lourdes Benitez Reyes on your investiture as the 8th President of the Philippine Women's University.

I stand witness in the successful achievements of PWU and its great contribution in producing alumni who have carved their own niche in Philippine society. I encourage you to continuously strive to create great minds that will one day chart the course, not only of our beloved City, but our country as well.

Jose L. Atienza, Jr.
Mayor of Manila

Calling all alumni and friends of PWU - You are invited to attend this event and be part of the celebration!

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will administer tomorrow, February 19, 2003, the oath of office to Dr. Amelia Lourdes Benitez Reyes as the incoming President of the Philippine Women's University (PWU) System and its Affiliate Schools for Men and Women.

PWU Board of Trustees Chair Dr. Helena Z Benitez said that Dr. Reyes was voted unanimously and that the Board and the PWU community take pride in introducing her as the 8th President of the University.

The induction rites will be held at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) starting at 12 noon, ushered in and preceded by a Holy Mass to be concelebrated by twelve priests led by Bishop Rolando J. Tirona of Malolos, Bulacan.

The 4th alumna to assume this post, Dr. Reyes brings to the PWU presidency a broad spectrum of educational and professional preparation, capped by more than 40 years of continuous service at her Alma Mater, and by pioneering advocacies and achievements in the field of education, as well as in gender and development.

At PWU as a faculty member, she assumed such posts as Director for Testing and Research, Dean of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Executive Vice-President, Chancellor, lifetime member of the Board of Trustees, and twice as Acting President.

With two baccalaureate (both cum laude) feathers on her college cap from PWU, she attended Trinity College in Washington, D.C., for two years before she came back to take her Master's at the Ateneo de Manila while teaching undergraduates at PWU at the same time.

She worked as program director at FAPE (Fund for Assistance to Private Education), which then funded her doctoral studies at Stanford University in the U.S., at the completion of which she was elevated to assistant vice-president.

Kicking off her advocacy with faculty development programs, scholarship grants for graduate centers, and retirement plans for private schools, Dr. Reyes advanced the idea of scholarship through educational tuition vouchers—which were later to develop as educational service contracts at DECS (Department of Education, Culture & Sports) for private schools and colleges

In her doctoral thesis, "The Impact of Centralized Political Authority on Higher Educational Organization: The Philippine Case," she presented the need for government bureaucracy to respond structurally with the changes happening in the various sectors, including education. Early on, she advocated for change in the government system for it to adopt modified presidential and parliamentary forms, believing these relevant features to best represent the emerging Filipino political culture.

Upon returning to PWU in 1979, she conceptualized and launched program ASCEND (Accelerating Service in Community Education for National Development), an educational experiment in community education that lifts the status of women and provides livelihood and skills training, where the university impacts on the economic and social order, in effect the national culture

Believing that women can make a difference in a new world anchored on character and values formation, spirituality and a culture of peace, women studies were incorporated in the curriculum of all degree courses at PWU. This came as a result of DIWA (Development Institute for Women in Asia-Pacific), which she formed the following year. The awareness of other women colleges of the concept paved the way for the organization of WSAP (Women's Studies Association of the Philippines), with PWU as one of the seven charter members. Dr. Reyes is the current WSAP president.

The Philippine National Centennial celebration in 1996-1999 became the season of harvest for her efforts. The event saw GO and NGO women networks from all over the country galvanized to participate in activities, and the concept of "Herstory" taking wing—a feminist reconstruction of history to bring about, establish and acknowledge women's role in the task of gaining independence, social and moral reform, and nation-building.

Dr. Reyes, as Chair of the National Commission on the Role of Women (NCRFW), headed the Philippine delegation to the UN Commission on the Status of Women World Meeting held in New York, June 2002.

In this global forum, she introduced the concept of "Herstory" in the Women 2000 Outcome Document (para 134), finally establishing the recognition "that one of the causes of discrimination and marginalization in decision-making is women's invisibility in policy formulation and historical accounting."

Still as NCRFW Chair, she directed the drafting of the Philippine Agenda for Women's Empowerment—which supported gender mainstreaming work and which led to the formulation of the Framework Plan for Women adopted under the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

She also presided over the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) first ministerial meeting for women, which gave way to the formation of a Task Force that drafted the framework for the integration of women in the APEC. Mainly through Dr. Reyes as head of delegation and project overseer for GIS, APEC has learned to embrace gender issues as part of its agenda, making it one of the very few regional organizations to integrate gender in its programs.

Dr. Reyes believes that the Philippines can take the leading position in assisting other countries in institutionalizing gender mainstreaming policies via the establishment of a Gender Mainstreaming Institute in Asia-Pacific.

She said the thrust of her presidency is anchored on the vision of its founders: building a faith community while providing quality education for global competitiveness, through character formation steeped in values and virtues for transformative leadership.

"This is the new reality that reconciles the masculine and the feminine perspectives," she said. "An invitation and a call to holiness rooted in wholeness, seeking fullest expression in culture and the arts, and searching for a higher synthesis between science and the humanities, between academic knowledge and the values and virtues that transform an ordinary life into heroism through the sanctification of daily toils and struggles."

This kind of heroism, as the enriching fountain of our daily purification, is needed by everyone, in the family, at school, in the workplace, in the community, by our country and the whole generation today, she added.

As the incoming 8th President and the 4th alumna to assume the post in the 83-year history of PWU, Dr. Reyes will be formally invested with authority of the position by Chair Ester A. Garcia of the Commission on Higher Education, before President of the Republic, Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, administers to her the oath of office.

Then a special Apostolic blessing will be extended to her by the Most Reverend Bishop Rolando J. Tirona, and a special Papal blessing from the Vatican will be read over her.

At the close of the installation ceremonies, the new President of the Philippine Women's University System will give her inaugural address, which she has entitled: "In Keeping with the Promise...Commitment to a Family Legacy."

Philippine International Convention Center

February 19, 2003, 1:30 p.m

GREETINGS

Women Sector
Commissioner Bai Norhata M. Alonto,
Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor
Ms. Myrna Yao,
President, NCWP (NGO)
Ms. Aurora de Dios
Chair, NCRFW (GO)

Professional Education
Dr. Armand Fabella
Former DECS Secretary/Former FAPE Chair

Foreign Educational Partner
Dr. Ian Andrews
Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada

Former Head of State
His Excellency Former President Fidel V. Ramos

PASSING OF THE PWU LEGACY TO THE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT
Dr. Helena Z Benitez
Chairperson, PWU Board of Trustees

Reading of the Appointment
Dr. Vicente Jayme
Vice Chairman, PWU Board of Trustees

Presentation of the Academic Collar
Dr. Jose Conrado Benitez
Immediate Past PWU President

Presentation of the University Mace
Dr. Manuel S. Alba
Member, PWU Board of Trustees
Dr. Renato L. Paras
Member, PWU Board of Trustees

INVESTITURE OF THE 8TH PRESIDENT, THE 4TH PHILWOMENIAN
by:
The Honorable Ester A. Garcia
Chair, Commission on Higher Education

Assisted by:
Chairperson Dr. Helena Z Benitez and President's children, grandchildren and siblings: Marlyn & Antonio Lilles, Elizabeth Reyes, Alfredo & Myra Reyes, Alex & Cristina Reyes, Maia & Miela Lilles, Andie, Mika, Sevi, Kyle, Renzo, Chino, Revo, Misha Reyes, Dr. & Mrs. Jose Conrado Benitez, Margarita Benitez Canto, Mr. & Mrs. Noel Benitez

Witnesses:
Government Officials and Representatives
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
University and College Presidents
Women GOs & NGOs
Alumni Associations (local & overseas)
Local and Foreign Partners

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE TO
Dr. Amelia Lourdes Benitez Reyes

by:
HER EXCELLENCY
President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo

SPECIAL APOSTOLIC BLESSING ON THE NEWLY INSTALLED PRESIDENT
Most Reverend Bishop Rolando J. Tirona

INAUGURAL ADDRESS
"Keeping with thePromise...Commitment to a Family Legacy"
Dr. Amelia Lourdes Benitez Reyes

Messages

Special Papal Blessing

The Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, imparts the desired Apostolic Blessing to Mrs. Amelou Benitez Reyes (who) will be installed as the 8th President of the prestigious Philippine Women's University in Manila.

Invoking an abundance of heavenly favours and the continued protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Vatican City
February 19, 2003

• • •

The Board of Trustees and the Philippine Women's University community take pride in introducing the 8th President of the University, Dr. Amelia Lourdes (Amelou) Benitez Reyes, Ph.D.

We wish Dr. Reyes great success in her administration especially in the active participation of the alumni in the university's future.

Dr. Helena Z Benitez
Chair, PWU
Board of Trustees

• • •

It is a special pleasure to congratulate my former classmate from Trinity College in Washington D.C. as the President of the PWU.

I wish you all the best as you take on this new post which you are very well prepared by your experience and education. I assure you, Amelou, of my support and assistance on future collaborative programs you may have with educational institutions in the United States.

Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
H ouse of Representatives
Washington, D.C., U.S.A

• • •

The symbiotic relationship that exist in happy juxtaposition between Philippine Women's University and Amelou Benitez Reyes comes to full fruition at her installation as the eighth President of the University.

I had the opportunity to watch the unfolding of this relationship, and with all due respect to the Philippine [illegible] has obtained the better side of the bargain. Her experience has taken her far and wide beyond mere academic preparation, into the fields of international relations, political economy and aggregative educational management, among others.

We look forward to the innovative leadership that Amelou will no doubt be exercising in ensuring that the University remains at the forefront in national educational development.

Armand V. Fabella
Chair, Jose Rizal Univ.
Board of Trustees

• • •

Having worked with Dr. Amelou Benitez-Reyes very closely, it is a great honor for me to extend on behalf with the NCRFW and staff our congratulations.

I am personally edified by her spirituality and dependence on Divine Providence and God's hand and role in the lives of men and women.

(Signed:)
Aurora Javate De Dios
Chair, NCRFW

• • •

May the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon us all!

It is with great pride and honor that I join in honoring Dr. Amelou Benitez-Reyes who have helped me weather trials and challenges in my adult life.

May the God Almighty preserve you and your family.

(Signed:)
Bai Putri Northata D.M. Alonto
Commissioner
of Muslim Affairs

• • •

The PWU alumni and PWUAA are honored to be part of the installation of Dr. Amelou Benitez Reyes as the 8th President of the Philippine Women's University.

We are truly elated that Dr. Reyes is the fourth alumna to assume the highest position on campus.

The Philippine Women's University Alumni Association has been given the opportunity to contribute in shaping young lives as they strive for excellence, prosperity and a better world now and tomorrow.

Nilda Servando Rotor
President, PWUAA

Calling all alumni and friends of PWU - You are invited to attend this event and be part of the celebration!

Sulu next stop for US troops

From page A1

Abu Sayyaf, particularly those bandits in Patikul, Sulu, was the main target of the exercises.

But in his press briefing, Bunye merely said that Filipino and American officials had agreed that because of the "existing situation" in the province, Sulu was deemed the "most practical place to hold the exercise."

"We could safely say that the place is a good choice because there are still elements operating in the province," he said.

"It is widely acknowledged that the training, advice and assistance we received in Basilan were critical factors that led to the defeat of the Abu Sayyaf (there)," Bunye said.

He also said: "As in the Balikatan exercise in Basilan, the exercise (this year) will form part of the country's overall and ongoing defense and security cooperation activities with the United States, which continue to focus on increasing our ability to protect ourselves against terrorist threat."

Same terms

Bunye said the new exercise would adopt the "terms of reference" used for Balikatan 02-1.

Among other provisions, those terms allow American troops to fire their weapons in self-defense.

"There will be no need for a new TOR," Bunye said. "We'll follow exactly the same Balikatan terms."

But a staunch opponent of last year's exercises said the new war games, Vice President Teofisto Guingona, said that the presence of US forces in Sulu may aggravate the situation in the area where Abu Sayyaf terrorists continue to hold ground.

Guingona also said he was concerned about the effects of the new exercises on the Muslim community in Mindanao.

"The impending US invasion of Iraq is against a Muslim country and this can be perceived as a direct consequence," Guingona told the INQUIRER.

"Already there are reports in the media that links local Muslims to international terrorists," the Vice President said.

Guingona said US and Filipino troops can conduct the military exercises in a safer place.

"When you go to an area or scene of conflict to train, you can escalate the hostilities," Guingona said.

Administration officials have dismissed news reports that US troops would be allowed to engage the Abu Sayyaf in direct combat, and Bunye reiterated in a statement that the exercise would be "conducted in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the Philippines."

Civil humanitarian projects, such as basic health services, will be a significant component of the exercise, Bunye said. As part of last year's Balikatan exercise, US troops also repaired schools, built health centers, dug wells and fixed roads and airport runways in a bid to cut support for terrorists among the Muslim population.

A contingent of American troops has remained in Basilan and Zamboanga City to see to the civil works projects.

Bunye acknowledged that the holding of the new exercises would generate protest actions again, but he said he continued to be hopeful. "There was an equal or greater positive reaction to the presence of American trainors (last year)."

Upcoming consultations

Bunye said the number of US soldiers and support troops, as well as the duration of the joint exercises, would be determined in upcoming consultations with the United States, including a visit this week by Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Weber, commanding general of the 3rd Marine Division, based in Okinawa, Japan.

Other details on the exercise were not immediately released.

Department of National Defense spokesperson Lt. Col. Danilo Servando said the exercise had been in the works for more than three months.

US officials did not comment immediately.

Separately, US military instructors and Marines are training government troops in at least five smaller exercises in different parts of the country.

Last year's Balikatan exercises saw the participation of 1,200 US troops. The Americans also brought in high-technology military hardware, from Chinook helicopters to spy planes.

Technical assistance from the US military, particularly the use of spy planes, played a significant role in the killing of Abu Sayyaf spokesperson Abu Sabaya in a sea encounter in Sibuco Bay, Zamboanga del Norte on June 21, 2002.

In a phone conversation on Feb. 11, US President George W. Bush pledged continued support to Ms Macapagal in the continuing effort to defeat the Abu Sayyaf, which has been linked to the al-Qaida international terrorist network.

Asked whether Balikatan 03-1 was part of Bush's pledge to Ms Macapagal, Bunye replied: "This is just an ongoing commitment."

Broad program

The Department of National Defense said that the coming exercise was part of the "broad program of bilateral counterterrorism cooperation with the US."

"This is a follow-up to last year's actions in Basilan with the AFP in command and (which), with the US in a supportive role, drove hundreds of Abu Sayyaf group terrorists from the island, restoring order and reestablishing government services," Lt. Col. Danilo Servando, head of the DND's public affairs office, said.

"As a result, the Southern Philippines' focus has shifted from Basilan to the Sulu Archipelago..." he added. *With reports from Norman Bordadora; AP, AFP, Reuters; Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

MILF, not Pentagon gang, real target

From page A1

elements as well as MILF (rebels) in the Raja Muda area," he said.

Engineers ambushed

In the next two days, Ermita said, suspected Muslim rebels ambushed a contingent of military engineers, killing one soldier and wounding six others, and "harassed" a Special Forces group.

These incidents prompted the AFP to go after "the lawless elements as well as the MILF in the area," he said.

"There were violations (of the cease-fire agreement), hence the need for the military to act," he added.

Ermita added that government troops who captured the Buliok complex on Friday were able to confirm that the MILF had reestablished a camp.

Soldiers found numerous bunkers and trenches dug around the place. Ermita said the government never allowed the MILF to reestablish its camps.

"It appears they have re-established Raja Muda as their camp. The military reports that there are live land mines in the area. Why would you place land mines in the area if you don't expect trouble to come your way?" Ermita asked.

Reason to talk

Ermita said violations of the ceasefire agreement were "nothing new," and again called on the MILF leadership to convene the coordinating committee on the cessation of hostilities (CCCH).

"There's reason for us to sit down more than ever because there's fighting on the ground. Now that the fighting is over, I think the environment will be better for us to resume talks," he said.

Santiago said government troops were "holding their line" after the capture of the Buliok complex.

He said the military would now take on a supporting role to the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

"But we will address military situations accordingly," he warned.

After the Cocis meeting, Ermita reportedly got word that the MILF peace panel "is considering" resuming peace talks again.

"Reportedly there's a text message received from a member of the central committee that they're willing to pursue the (peace) negotiations in Kuala Lumpur," he said.

New target?

Citing intelligence reports, MILF rebels said the next target of the military campaign against them would be the mountainous part of its former lair, Camp Abubakar, which straddles the towns of Matanog and Buldon in Maguindanao.

The government only managed to occupy the lower portion of Camp Abubakar when President Joseph Estrada declared his "all-out war" against the MILF in March 2000. The upper portion of the camp, consisting of vast, uneven terrain, is still under the control of the MILF.

Mukalid Alih, a veteran MILF fighter, said if the military launched another offensive, the rebels would see to it that they would hit the soldiers from the rear, front and side. "This is the way to fight a strong enemy," Alih said.

The MILF's intelligence reports also indicated that the government would use the alleged link of the rebel group with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network to justify its offensives.

But no less than Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Narciso Abaya, the top general in Mindanao, told the INQUIRER that the documents recovered from the alleged house of MILF chair Salamat Hashim inside Buliok complex did not indicate any such links.

"There were documents on how they manufacture bombs, ambuscades and all forms of terroristic activities, but we are not saying these documents recovered could possibly link MILF to the al-Qaida network," Abaya said.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said government soldiers had been deployed near the towns of Barira, Buldon and Matanog in Maguindanao.

"It clearly shows who the military is after. It's not the Pentagon kidnap-for-ransom gang, it's the MILF," Kabalu said.

The MILF believes the assault on upper Camp Abubakar will start next month, with the attack expected to also affect the towns of Balabagan, Kapatagan, Malabang and Butig in Lanao del Sur. *With reports from Rosa-May V. de Guzman and Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Attack gives peace talks worst beating in years

By TJ Burgonio and the PDI Mindanao Bureau

The military assault on Buliok complex has given the stop-start peace negotiations its worst beating in years, pro-peace Muslim activists said yesterday.

Already, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front has said it will not resume formal peace talks with the government later this month. It also demanded the withdrawal of troops who overran MILF strongholds in the complex, part of the sprawling Liguasan Marsh area that straddles North Cotabato and Maguindanao provinces.

The week-long fighting left more than 160 people dead and up to 51,000 civilians displaced.

The attack violated the ceasefire agreement and infringed on the human and religious rights of thousands of Muslims caught in the crossfire, charged Maradeka, an umbrella organization of Muslim groups advocating peace and democracy.

Nash Pangadapun, Maradeka secretary-general, warned that Muslim organizations would stage a massive rally this week in Manila in protest of the government's "all-out war" against the MILF.

In a statement, MILF vice chair Al Haj Murad said his group will not return to the peace talks until it is convinced of the government's "sincerity and commitment to the peace process."

Rebel spokesperson Eid Kabalu said soldiers occupying Buliok should withdraw as a sign of goodwill.

"All that we want could be expressed in one word—sincerity," Kabalu told The Associated Press by telephone. "How would they manifest that? Pull out, disengage and stop firing. Otherwise, the talks would be an exercise in futility."

Murad said the guerrillas also want a guarantee that political decisions made by Arroyo would bind the military. He cited Arroyo's unheeded order last week for the military to halt the offensive in observance of a Muslim holiday. *With reports from Grace C. Albasin, Charlie C. Senase and Anthony S. Allada, Rosa-May V. de Guzman, PDI Mindanao Bureau; AP*

A 500-pound bomb dropped by an Air Force OV 10 Bronco gouged out this massive crater at the MILF's Buliok complex along the border of North Cotabato and Maguindanao provinces.

VAL HANDUMON

VAL HANDUMON

MARINES who spearheaded the assault on the MILF stronghold at the Buliok complex walk past rows of fallen coconut trees and banana plants devastated by the heavy fighting.

Europe struggles to close rift

From page A1

across town at Nato headquarters, where Belgium, France and Germany had held out for a month against 14 European allies—as well as the United States and Canada—over starting defensive measures to protect Turkey in case of an Iraq war. The stalemate that had opened the biggest rift in the West since the Cold War.

Germany and Belgium dropped their objections for a deal late Sunday, but the only way Nato got the deal was by going to its defense planning committee, which Paris withdrew from in 1966, to negotiate an end to the Nato deadlock. Paris participates only in political consultations.

Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt called the Nato agreement "a good start" for the EU discussions.

Still, after the deal was reached, France, Germany and Belgium issued a statement balancing their commitment to honor their defense obligations with their desire to disarm Iraq peacefully.

The three countries will "continue to defend the view that we must have a peaceful solution through the United Nations. That would be a good thing for the EU," Verhofstadt told reporters.

On Sunday, Turkish Foreign Minister Yasar Yakis said his nation may stall its decision on allowing in US troops to open a northern front against Iraq, a move that could hamper US war plans. The parliament had been expected to decide on it on Tuesday, but Yakis said a vote that early "would be very difficult."

France and Germany have led an anti-war drive in Europe, insisting there is no case for military action yet against Saddam Hussein. German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder has gone even further, ruling out participation in any military action, even if it gets UN backing.

Crucial test

The summit is seen as a crucial test of the EU drive to forge a united front on foreign policy and security issues. Failure to work out a common stand on Iraq could exacerbate divisions over the EU's future, especially the drive by France and Germany to create a power capable of balancing the United States on the world stage.

The 15-member European Union, which expands to 25 in 2004, has struggled to forge a common foreign policy to match its economic clout as the world's largest trading bloc.

French Foreign Minister Dominique De Villepin urged Europe to reach a common position on Iraq because, in a reference to the United States, "one single power cannot ensure the security of the world," he said.

"We must work together so that Europe is capable of affirming its principles and identity," he told the Journal du Dimanche, a French weekly.

The anti-war camp got a boost from protests around the world on Saturday and Sunday that saw millions of people marching against war.

Still, many EU members are reluctant to surrender their foreign policy and are determined to retain strong ties with the United States, which they see as essential to their security. Several eastern European states preparing to join the European Union were excluded from attending Monday's meeting because of their strong pro-US stance.

In Washington, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice said a confrontation was inevitable with Saddam.

"Sooner or later, we believe sooner, the Security Council is going to have to say that he has not taken that final opportunity to comply, and the Security Council is going to have to act, or the United States will have to act with a coalition of the willing," Rice said on "Fox News Sunday."

That stance has been backed the strongest by Britain, Italy and Spain.

Undeterred

In a speech to party delegates on Saturday, British Prime Minister Tony Blair acknowledged his tough stance on Iraq was making him unpopular, but refused to be deterred.

"I do not seek unpopularity as a badge of honor. But sometimes it is the price of leadership and the cost of conviction," he said.

He argued there was a "moral case" for war and said it would be "an act of humanity" to depose Saddam.

In an interview with Madrid daily ABC, Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar maintained his government was acting in the best interests of the world and Spain with regards to the Iraqi crisis.

Acknowledging the deep divide, Greek officials say they are not even drafting a proposed statement ahead of the summit, preferring instead to wait to see what emerges from Monday's discussions.

In Cairo, Arab foreign ministers could not agree on Sunday on whether to hold an emergency summit on the Iraqi crisis, spending most of the day disputing whether Washington or Baghdad should do more to avert a possible war.

Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa said the ministers had decided to continue talks on convening a summit on Friday.

"This is not a disagreement. We only need more consultations to set a date that is more convenient to all," Moussa said. *AP*

Consumer group hits oil price hike

From page A1

meeting with officials of the energy department, the Big Three and the new players to reconcile the computation of oil price increases.

Concepcion reiterated the need for greater transparency in oil pricing, especially now that the industry is deregulated.

Roberto Kanapi, Shell general manager for external affairs, declined to comment on Concepcion's statement. "I am not privy to his computations and I don't know the basis of his figures," Kanapi said.

Petron officials could not be reached for comment.

Kanapi earlier said that the increases were aimed at recovering increased costs of petroleum between January and December.

PEREZ: Energy secretary calls on consumers to "exercise their power of choice."

CONCEPCION: Businessman reiterates need for greater transparency in oil pricing.

War jitters in the Middle East and low supply jacked up average Dubai crude prices by $2.14 per barrel to $27.87 in January, from $25.73 in December.

During the same period, the peso weakened against the dollar by 8 centavos, from P53.49 to P53.57 last month.

Yesterday, the peso weakened to its 18-month low of P54.19 against the dollar. The weakening of the peso may further lead to a new round of fuel price increases.

In the wake of the series of price increases, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. is calling on consumers to "exercise their power of choice."

"We urged the consumers to be vigilant in scouting for the lower-priced fuel in the market and patronize those companies that have not raised prices," Perez said in a separate statement.

Petron's Blaze is now retailed at P21.09-P21.50 per liter; XCS, P20.32-P20.89; unleaded gasoline, P19.37-P20.33; diesel, P15.08-P16.28; kerosene, P15.74-P19.38. The prices depend on the location of gas stations.

Shell's Velocity now costs P21.10-P21.25 per liter; Super, P20.25-P20.85; unleaded gasoline, P19.05-P20.39; diesel, P15.08-P16.05; kerosene, P15.83-P16.19.

Caltex, which has not followed suit, has maintained its prices of Gold at P19.65-P20.65 per liter; Silver, P18.72-P20.15; diesel, P15.69-P15.57; kerosene, P14.89-P15.90.

Before last week's price increases, the price of gasoline hit a historic high during the Gulf War more than a decade ago.

The price of gasoline rose to P20.70 per liter on Dec. 6, 1990. The Energy Regulatory Board rolled back the prices of gasoline by about P5 per liter three days later.

The deregulation of the oil industry has been a boon to the oil companies. In 2001, Shell posted a net income of P1.7 billion while Petron reported a net income of P1.2 billion.

Camarines Sur town boasts of 'barangay hall in the sky'

From page A1

San Marcos, had been bugged by problems of where to build the barangay hall since he was elected in 1997.

With nobody willing to sell a lot, Prado said he had thought of the space above the provincial road. "What came into my mind were the LRT (light rail transit) structures above the national road in Metro Manila which the government allows. So I said, 'Why not build the same to solve the lack of space on which to build the barangay hall?'" he said.

But no higher government official was seriously buying his idea until Camarines Sur Gov. Luis R. Villafuerte Sr. asked him on April 25, 2000 what help the provincial government could provide to his village.

Without hesitation, he told Villafuerte during a barangay fiesta that he wanted to build the high-rise barangay hall. The idea caught the interest of the governor who asked him to submit a project proposal.

P1-M funding

By the end of June 2000, the construction of the facility began after Villafuerte approved the project and its P1-million funding from the provincial government.

"There's no problem with the barangay hall project being above a provincial road. The provincial government, which has supervision over provincial roads, approved it after the barangay officials have complied with the requirements like a resolution for the project and other necessary permits," Villafuerte said.

The structure, with a floor area of 72 sqm, was finished in December 2000, in time for the celebration of the first year of the new millennium. Engineers from the provincial government made the design, Prado said.

Multipurpose

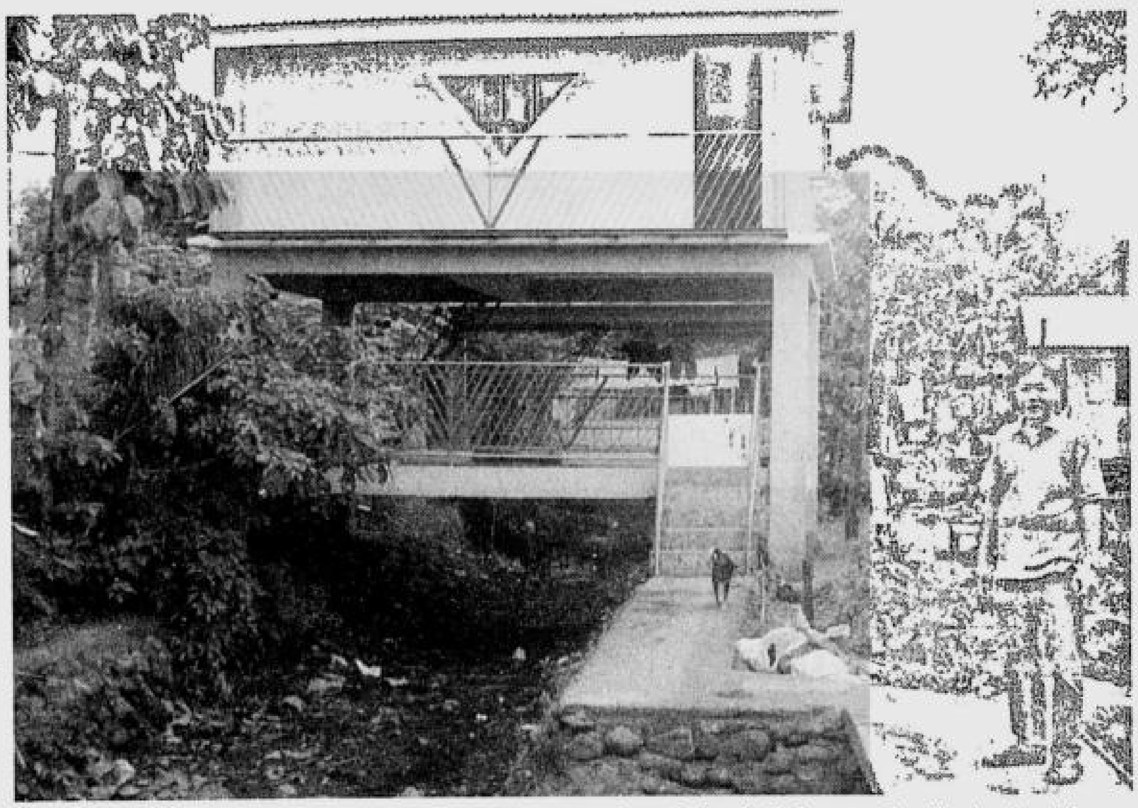
He said the construction took almost six months to ensure that the building's foundations were strong and the design requirements were complied with. For the foundations alone, the engineers excavated 2.13 m (7 ft) and used 35 sacks of cement for each of the four pillars.

In November 2000, when the "hall in the sky" was undergoing finishing touches, Camarines Sur experienced a storm. "That was the first time it was used as an evacuation center where more than 50 individuals, mostly from families near the river banks, were sheltered during the storm," Prado said.

Aside from being a multipurpose hall that officials of the barangay council and the Sangguniang Kabataan can use for holding their affairs, the facility serves as base for the barangay guards, he said.

Prado's idea has spawned another barangay project that makes use of public domain not conventionally used for building structures.

Low-cost housing units for poor families are to be constructed on the banks of a creek that is among the tributaries of the Bicol River, as part of the socialized housing program of the provincial government. Already, four two-story housing units have been built under the program, dubbed "Home along the River."



HOMES atop a creek. Two-story houses straddling a creek are being built for poor families by the village government of San Marcos in Camaligan, Camarines Sur. Credit government officials for creativity but, again, is this legal?

JUAN ESCANDOR/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Prado said the rapid population growth in San Marcos had forced public officials like him to study concepts and create ideas that make use of limited public domain spaces.

Such ideas and concepts arise from basic human needs, he said. And in the case of San Marcos, the need to explore all possibilities to overcome space limitations has resulted in the unconventional dwellings.

MAGANTO: After years in the PNP freezer, he's back in the center—of controversy. PDI PHOTO

Maganto case: Loose lips or crab mentality?

From page A1

removed from Task Force Kintanar for recklessly divulging details of the Kintanar investigation.

The last straw purportedly came after Maganto announced at a press conference that two National Housing Authority (NHA) officials were being investigated for allegedly setting up the assassination.

"The information never came from me," Maganto said. "It was the officers who came forward and claimed that I was accusing them. Perhaps they're guilty. But I never mentioned their names."

The NPA had owned up to the crime, saying Kintanar was killed for his alleged counter-revolutionary and criminal activities.

Maganto said his team had managed to "solve" the Kintanar killing by implicating at least eight men, including the two NHA officials.

He said the task force was about to file charges against the suspects before the Department of Justice had Ebdane not taken him out of the case.

"It all boils down to this: I was the one who turned the cap but someone else would now remove it from the soft drink bottle. That's very unfair," he said.

The police intelligence chief, however, said investigators had not established that NHA managers Higino Equipaje and Guillermo Gudoy set up Kintanar for liquidation on Jan. 23 inside a Japanese restaurant in Quezon City.

"There's no evidence against them. You can't be charged just for eating with somebody in a restaurant," Chief Supt. Robert Delfin, police director for intelligence, told reporters.

If at all, the police could tap the NHA managers as witnesses and use them "to follow up" on the case, Delfin said.

Equipaje and Gudoy had denied Maganto's allegations.

Delfin said Task Force Kintanar was not dissolved, but was merely transferred to the Central Police District (CPD).

The task force will turn over its findings on the case to the CPD, which is headed by Chief Supt. Napoleon Castro.

The PNP Directorate for Intelligence, which Delfin heads, will assist the CPD in tracking down members of the NPA hit squad who killed Kintanar.

Girl with hole in heart needs people with big hearts

From page A1

ple with good hearts will help repair her "bad" one.

Dr. Therese Borromeo-Lumicao, a pediatrician in Cagayan de Oro City, recommended heart surgery for the young girl within the year.

"Had the hole [in her heart] been diagnosed when she was younger, she should have undergone surgery before school age to avoid complications," Lumicao said. The hole now measures about 1.5 cm, she said.

Lumicao said it would be best for her to undergo an operation before classes begin in June. On a danger scale of 1 to 10, she placed Kitkat's condition at 8.

"An operation is highly recommended," the doctor said.

Kitkat is creative, her mother Tessie said. "Small as she is, she has longed for a canvas because she wants to paint, but I told her she's still too young for that."

She is also generous, Tessie said. "When it comes to sharing, she doesn't care if she has nothing to eat so long as others have."

"We have been telling her that she is very special, and with her creativity and generosity, we are sure she will have a good life ahead," the teary-eyed woman said.

Tessie and her husband Emmanuel, who are both government employees, said they could not afford the cost of an open-heart operation.

Lumicao has shown Tessie the surgery rates at the Philippine Heart Center (PHC). The charity package—the cheapest—costs P186,450, while the highest priced, which includes a 10-day stay at the hospital, is worth P275,000.

Tessie said she had already sent letters to politicians to seek their help. Bukidnon Gov. Jose Ma. Zubiri facilitated the evaluation of Kitkat's case at the PHC on Feb. 17.

"We cannot let this opportunity pass us. We know how difficult it is for us to line up at the heart center and wait until our Tracy can be evaluated," Tessie said.

"We really do not have the money to travel, but our friends, especially my colleagues, passed the hat around to raise the money we need for the trip to Manila," she added.

"I am really ashamed that we are begging, but if this is the only way to save our Tracy, I would do it. I don't care, we don't want to lose her," Tessie said. She can be reached at mobile phone No. 0920-5606746.

Bananas lack sex? Not in RP

From page A1

a hundred varieties, including those with seeds, have plenty of it.

"Bananas actually have sex all the time," said Dr. Desiree M. Hautea, director of the Institute of Plant Breeding (IPB) at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, Laguna. "It's just that they (seedless ones) are not having children."

Hautea was responding to the statement of a Belgian plant pathologist, Emile Frison, last month that the banana hasn't had sex in 10,000 years and that without scientific help, the sterile, seedless fruit could disappear within 10 years.

Frison said the fruit lacked the genetic diversity to fight off diseases and pests. But Hautea assured banana lovers that a disease won't wipe out certain banana varieties here as the country is still home to the two parents of banana plants.

The seeded "primitive" bananas—wild progenitors of the present-day table variety bananas—are known locally as *"butuhan"* and *"saging matsing."* Though their pulp is edible, eating them is not pleasurable. They just have too many seeds. This is the reason our ancestors opted to cultivate the seedless bananas more than the seeded ones.

As part of its efforts to safeguard the country's banana resource, the IPB gene bank is home to more than 140 varieties of edible bananas, some of which have duplicates. There are 91 "unique" varieties in the Philippines, of which less than 10 are grown commercially.

Some are familiar, such as the sweet *"lakatan,"* the *"latundan,"* "bongolan" (local cavendish, which is for export), and "saba."

Others are the *"inabaniko,"* whose "fingers" in the bunch are attached to each other, *"kinamay dalaga"* or candy banana of Laguna, the *"sabang puti"* or the "mestizo of Zamboanga," and "Basilan" or the "Holandes of Davao," which is commonly cooked. These are the seedless varieties that have evolved from the old progenitors found in the Philippines.

The 'heart' for sex

How do bananas have sex? The banana plant's reproductive parts (the flowers) are found in the "*puso ng saging* (banana blossom)."

There are two kinds of flowers in the *"puso* (heart)." The first to come out are the females (which later become the fingers or the actual bananas), followed by the males.

The "equipment" for reproduction is there. They go through the "motion"—pollen from male flowers is transferred by animals (such as bats and insects) to the female flowers. However, common bananas are sterile. Even if pollen transfers have been made, no offspring is produced. Why?

IPB Assistant Director Nestor C. Altoveros said that long ago, when bananas were fertile, they had seeded fruits. Our human ancestors, who liked the taste of banana but despised its hard seeds, discovered that some bananas did not produce seeds. They prized these seedless bananas, and made an effort to cultivate them more than their seeded relatives.

Little did our ancestors know that what they had chosen were sterile bananas. The very feature that made this type of banana desirable was its inability to reproduce.

Seedless ancestor

Frison believed that all modern varieties were but clones of parent plants that diverged from a single seedless ancestor about 10,000 years ago in Vietnam (The banana itself is believed to have originated in Southeast Asia). That was how long the banana hasn't had sex, according to the Belgian. Seedless and sterile, bananas reproduced "vegetatively," with each generation an exact copy of the previous one.

"We consider as their children, other than the seeds, the suckers (young plant near the mother banana plant), which play an important role in the continuity of the existence of bananas," said plant breeder Dr. Felipe de la Cruz Jr., IPB head of the national plant genetic resources laboratory.

In Frison's theory, there would be no genetic difference between bananas 10,000 years ago and the banana that you're about to eat for dessert. "This means one *lakatan* is exactly like all the other billions of *lakatan* plants," Altoveros said.

Therein lie bananas' survival problems. "If one *lakatan* is susceptible to a disease, then all the billion *lakatan* are susceptible to the same disease," he said.

But count on the *"saging matsing"* to save the day for the banana. According to Altoveros, the parents (progenitors) of the modern seedless bananas are still with us. From these parents "we could hope to produce other seedless varieties," he said. (The seeds themselves can be grown into a banana plant.)

"There is a great chance that the parents will not become extinct, because they are fertile," Altoveros said.

"Banana-wise, we are truly blessed. Even if a worldwide extinction takes place, our *'saba'* will survive along with our *'saging matsing,'"* he said.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology noted that after Mt. Pinatubo erupted and the smoke cleared, among the first plants to sprout in the area was the banana.

The Philippines may truly be a "banana republic" after all.

FOUR DIGIT
1 9 6 3
(In exact order)

SUERTRES
3 5 6

MEGALOTTO 6/45
2 23 25 31 38 45

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

SPORTS

Editor **Al S. Mendoza** ◆ *Assistant Editor* **Edwin M. Villanueva**

Woods wins Buick by 4 over Swede

LA JOLLA, California—Tiger Woods marked his first tournament of 2003 by firing a closing four-under-par 68 to win the $4.5 million Buick Invitational by four strokes from Sweden's Carl Pettersson on Sunday (Monday in Manila).

The world number one finished with a 16-under total of 272 at the Torrey Pines South course to claim the 35th victory of his career and pick up a cheque for $810,000.

Woods's recent knee surgery and rehabilitation seemed to be a distant memory.

"I couldn't have asked for a better start," he told reporters.

"To have played 72 holes without being sore, which is a big positive, and to have won the tournament is another big positive."

Brad Faxon (72), who was one shot adrift of leader Woods overnight, came third on 277. World number three Phil Mickelson (72), Briny Baird (71) and PGA Tour rookie Arron Oberholser (71) shared fourth place on 278.

The anticipated showdown between Woods, playing competitively for the first time since undergoing knee surgery in December, and Mickelson never materialized as the left-hander failed to get closer than two strokes.

Woods, 27, in the same group as Mickelson and Faxon, powered to his 27th win in 29 attempts when leading after 54 holes.

Mickelson, who began the day two off the lead, parred the first 10 holes and bogeyed the next two to fall seven shots off the pace.

Faxon's hopes took a nosedive when he bogeyed the opening hole and he also never got closer than two strokes.

Using these 72 holes as a test for his knee, Woods recorded one eagle, 18 birdies and only four bogeys.

"When you're cooped up on the couch forever, you know, laying at home and just practicing...I miss competing," he said. "That, to me, is my rush, it's going out there and having to hit a golf shot that really matters."

Woods took control on Sunday with three birdies in the first six holes.

"Tiger put on the pressure early and never faltered," Faxon told reporters. "He did everything he had to do."

For much of the round, Mickelson outdrove the world number one but Woods hit better iron shots and buried his putts.

Only South Africa's Tim Clark, who shot a five-under 67, bettered Woods's score in the final round.

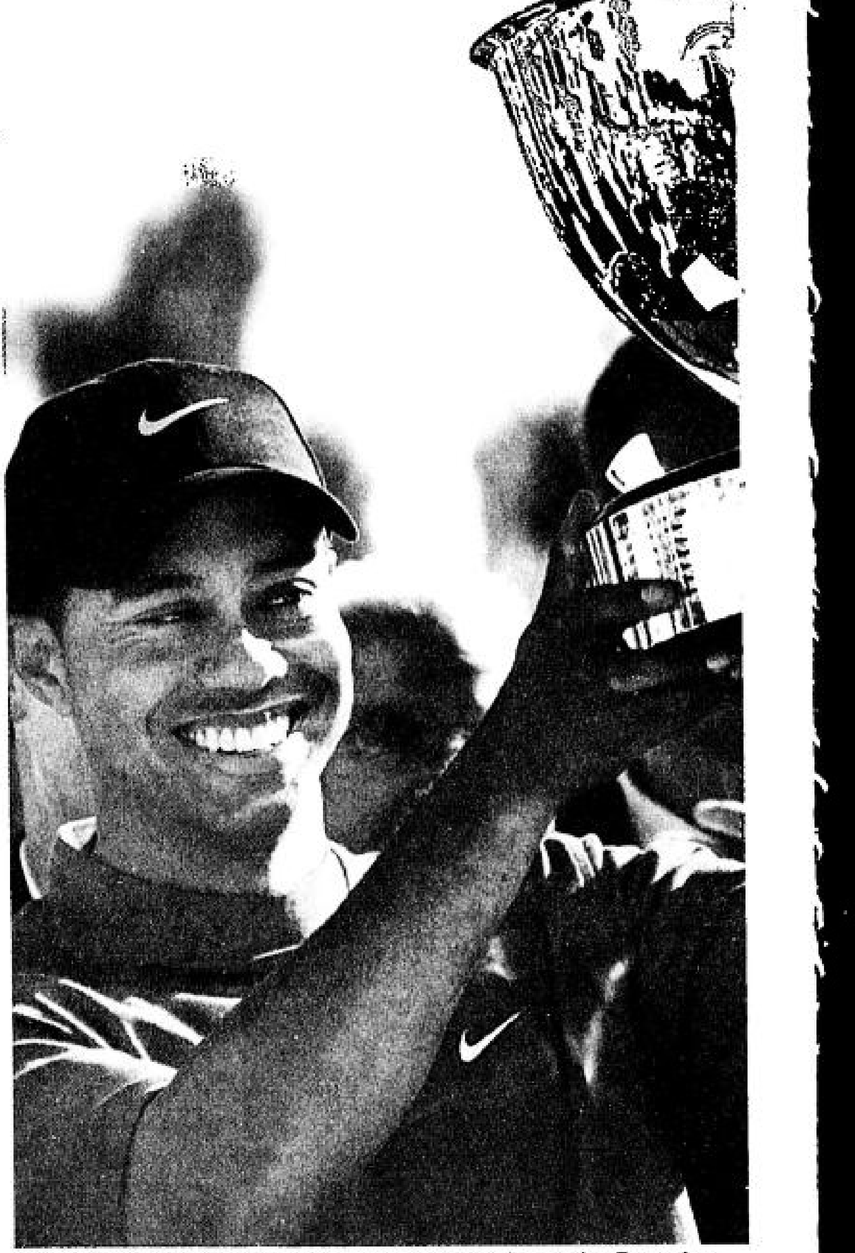
Reuters

Final round scores:

272 - T. Woods 70-66-68-68, 276 - C. Pettersson (Swe) 69-68-70-69 277 - B. Faxon 70-64-71-72 278 - A. Oberholser 65-70-72-71, B. Baird 70-65-72-71, P. Mickelson 69-68-69-72 279 - M. Dawson 68-66-76-69, M. Calcavecchia 71-67-71-69, C. Howell 74-68-68-69, L. Donald (Gbr) 69-70-71-69, J. Kaye 68-67-72-72 280 - T. Clark (Rsa) 70-70-73-67 281 - C. Perks (Nzl) 70-71-69-71, D. Paulson 68-67-73-73, B. Crane 71-68-70-72, F. Couples 69-68-70-74 282 - S. Alker (Nzl) 69-67-70-76 283 - J. Sindelar 70-71-73-69, C. Beckman 68-74-72-69, S. McRoy 67-71-72-73 ...

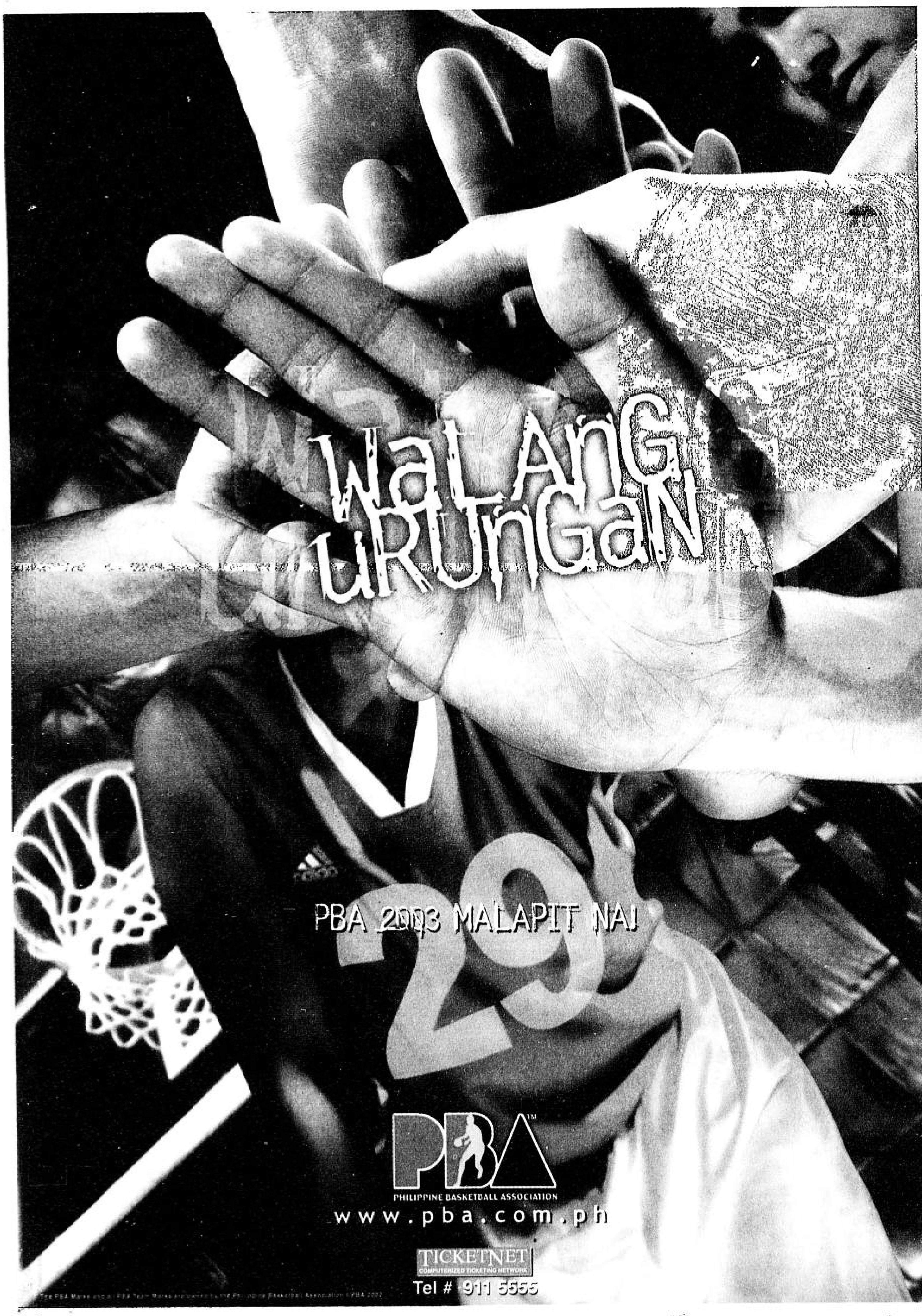
284 - S. Maruyama (Jpn) 73-70-70-71, P. Johansson (Swe) 72-68-75-69 285 - R. Sabbatini (Rsa) 73-65-72-75 286 - A. Cejka (Ger) 73-70-70-73, M. Goggin (Aus) 69-72-73-72 287 - B. Watts (Can) 69-71-72-75, B. Pappas (Rsa) 73-70-75-69 288 - K. Kuboya (Jpn) 72-67-74-75 289 - T. Levet (Fra) 69-72-74-74, J. Senden (Aus) 72-68-75-74, J. Morgan (Gbr) 67-72-74-76, A. Painter (Aus) 73-69-75-72 290 - G. Chalmers (Aus) 71-71-77-71 291 - G. Ogilvy (Aus) 75-68-74-74 292 - J. Coceres (Arg) 72-68-73-79 294 - A. Baddeley (Aus) 73-70-78-73.

Reuters



WOODS : No ill-effects of the knee surgery he had undergone last December.

AFP



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Someone else named Ernie in Tiger's mind

By Jim Wilson
Reuters Sports Writer

ELS

LA JOLLA, California—Even as world number one Tiger Woods was making his victorious 2003 debut by winning the Buick Invitational, the success of South Africa's Ernie Els was catching his attention.

The world number two has won five of the last six tournaments he has entered and finished runner-up in the other after blowing a one-shot lead at the last hole.

Els earned his latest victory at the European Tour's Johnnie Walker Classic in Australia on Sunday, winning by a massive 10 shots.

"Ernie winning again, that's pretty impressive," Woods told reporters after his four-shot victory at the Buick. "He's putting up some great scores, great numbers.

"Everybody makes a big deal of how far he's hitting it. But you can hit it 400 yards but you've still got to make putts.

"He's making every single putt inside 12 feet and that's what you have to do in order to win tournaments. You have to make those big putts.

"He's hitting his irons, I wouldn't say stiff on every hole, but he's hitting it close enough, but you can still miss those putts," Woods said.

"He's going up there and burying each and every one of them.

The putts, they are not just going in, but they are going in with perfect pace.

"That's when you know you've got a great feel for how things are going." In the only tournament Els did not win this year, the Singapore Masters, he finished second by a single shot to China's Zhang Lian Wei.

Woods and Els will be in competition at the World Match Play Championship later this month in California and the following week in the European Tour's Dubai Desert Classic, although each has said that in the event of war between the US and Iraq, neither will travel to Dubai.

Two weeks after Dubai, Woods and Els are scheduled to play in the PGA Tour's Bay Hill Invitational and the Players Championship, both in Florida.

Following a one-week break, the pair will face one another again in the US Masters, where Woods will seek a record third successive title.

SPORTSTV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA - Timberwolves vs Jazz, 10 a.m. (r - 8 p.m.), Solar Sports

TENNIS: Siebel Open, 8 a.m. (r), Star Sports

GOLF: Buick Invitational, 2 p.m. (r), Star Sports

BIATHLON: Biathlon World Cups, 9:30 a.m. (r), Star Sports

POOL: Rack 'Em Up 2, 1 p.m. and 9 p.m. (r), Star Sports

SOFTBALL: Women's College Softball, 2 p.m. (r), ESPN

SOCCER: Western Union World Football, 1:30 p.m. (r), ESPN

Spanish Football League, 6 p.m., Star Sports

UEFA Champions League, 3:30 a.m., ESPN

Schedules subject to change without prior notice

INTER-COLLEGIATE FINALS

UE Warriors rule Manila elims

THE UNIVERSITY of the East Warriors continued their rampage in the varsity ranks Sunday, topping the NCR eliminations for the National Inter-Collegiate Basketball Championship at the expense of Philippine Maritime Institute.

Flaunting their shooting proficiency from afar, UE routed PMI, 111-89, to claim its third championship after topping the BantayBata Challenge and the Champions Showdown late last year.

The Warriors, sparked by Charles Tan's six triples and Adrian Ronquillo's two, posted several 20-points leads and were never challenged to emerge as NCR's top qualifier for the national students meet set Feb. 23-March 2 at the Albay Astrodome in Legaspi City.

"The boys played inspired ball and, hopefully, they will continue to play this way next week," said UE coach Boyzie Zamar. "The last time the Warriors ruled the NCR elims was eight years ago while we haven't won the national students for about 30 years."

Despite the loss, PMI also qualified together with NCAA titlist San Sebastian College, which will serve as guest entry.

With UE ahead, 53-39, Zamar pulled out his starters, but PMI never got close as Robert Labagala, Paolo Hubalde and Philip Butel also did their share.

In the women's side, Lyceum edged Adamson, 67-62, to clinch its third title after snaring the WNCAA and NCRAA crowns.

Lyceum and Adamson will compete against teams from Naga City, Cebu and Davao in the division's first staging in the National Students.

The national finals is being hosted by BAP Region V director Jun Lavadia and Albay Gov. Alfrancis Bichara and is supported by YKL Color Fils, Spring Cooking Oil, Cebuana Lhuillier, Absolute, Healthy Options and Baker's Fair.

Roy Luarca

PBA nears deal with Big Dome

THE PBA Commissioner's Office yesterday agreed on a sponsorship payment offered by a local-brand toothpaste which will garnish the basketball turf of the Araneta Coliseum at the start of the 2003 PBA season on Sunday.

Beam toothpaste, which secured a three-year advertising deal with the management of the coliseum, has agreed to pay at least 30 percent of their P15-million sponsorship package to the PBA for the entire year.

Beam's proposal, however, has yet to get the nod of the PBA board of governors, a PBA insider said. The PBA board was deliberating on the issue at presstime.

June Navarro

Nutrilicious tryouts

NEW PBL team Nutrilicious will hold tryouts for players tomorrow, Feb. 19, 10 a.m. at the Dumlao Gym.

Sixers thwart Nets; Knicks stop Lakers

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey—Allen Iverson had 32 points and five of Philadelphia's 14 steals in leading the 76ers to a 90-83 win over the Nets on Sunday in Keith Van Horn's first game back in New Jersey.

Van Horn got into foul trouble and scored only nine points in 26 minutes against the team he helped to reach the NBA Finals last season, but he hit a clutch baseline jumper over Jason Kidd with 63 seconds to play to give Philadelphia an 84-77 lead.

Another ex-Net, Derrick Coleman, added 15 points and 16 rebounds—including two key putbacks in the final 3:40 as the 76ers gained a measure of revenge for an embarrassing 126-99 loss in the final game before the All-Star break.

In Los Angeles, Allan Houston outplayed Kobe Bryant, scoring an NBA season-high 53 points, as New York beat the Los Angeles Lakers, 117-110.

Houston shot 18-of-29 and made 12-of-14 attempts from the foul line as he surpassed the 51 points scored by Kobe Bryant at Denver last Wednesday night. He became the fifth player in franchise history to score 50 or more points and the first since Patrick Ewing accomplished the feat on Dec. 1, 1990.

Bryant led the Lakers with 40 points.

Snowstorm stops MJ bash

WASHINGTON—Michael Jordan will not get to play a National Basketball Association game on his 40th birthday after all. A huge snowstorm that dumped 30 centimeters of snow on the United States capitol Sunday prompted NBA officials to postpone Monday's scheduled game between Jordan's Washington Wizards and the Toronto Raptors.

COMPLETE RESULTS

Sixer 90, Nets 83; Raptors 99, Magic 97; Grizzlies 101, Bucks 95; Timberwolves 109, Warriors 102; Spurs 104, Kings 101; Pistons 90, Cavaliers 75; Hawks 99, Pacers 86; Hornets 100, Nuggets 92; Suns 102, Celtics 92; Knicks 117, Lakers 110.

AP

LSGH cagers to US

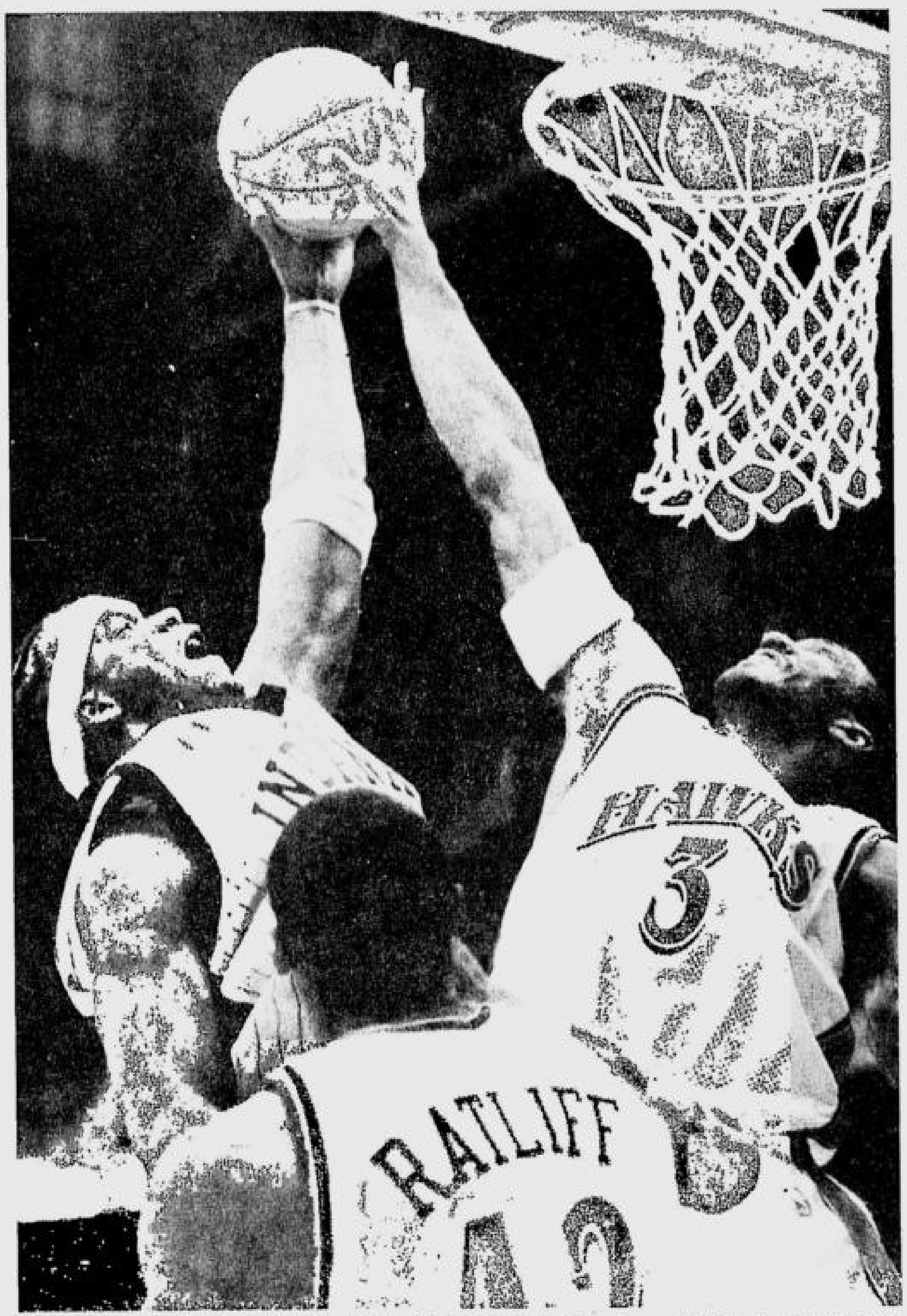
THE LA Salle Greenhills SBP Team will represent the country in the Las Vegas Classics US Open Basketball Tournament this April in Nevada, USA.

The LSGH squad, composed of boys aged 12 years and below, boasts an unblemished record from the elimination round of the SBP tournament all the way to the NCR finals, beating defending champion Ateneo de Manila University.

In the national finals, LSGH continued its winning streak over teams from Sta. Maria Catholic School of Iloilo, St. John School of Pangasinan, and Ateneo de Davao to conquer the national title.

The LSGH SBP team, which will represent the RP BEST Center in Las Vegas joust, is composed of Abby Cantos, Bernard Lopez, Anton Reyes, Vince Fran, Marco Yulo, Mathew Sia, Mark Alivia, Roal Zacarias, Jed Villanueva, Eduardo Aytona, Jr., Mico Sollano, Benedict Lopez, Kieffer Ravena and Pablo Darroca. Coaches are Hubert delos Santos and Ricky Magallanes.

LSGH president Bro. Bernie Oca is asking the alumni association to support the team.



ATLANTA Hawks' Shareef Abdur-Rahim (right) blocks Indiana Pacers' Al Harrington in their NBA game yesterday. At bottom is Hawk Theo Ratliff. The Hawks won, 99-86. REUTERS

Torre, 3 others Qatar-bound for Asian chess

By Roy Luarca

GRANDMASTERS Eugene Torre, Joey Antonio and Bong Villamayor and GM-candidate Marc Paragua will compete in the Asian Men's Individual Chess Championship slated in Doha, Qatar, Feb. 22-March 22.

The country's top players are set to leave either tomorrow or Thursday for the tournament serving as a qualifier for the 2004 Fide Men's World Championship.

"This (Asia Men's) is part of our preparations for the Southeast Asian Games and, thus far, the Philippine Sports Commission has been very supportive," said Torre. "They know that this is a strong tournament where we may be able to learn new things."

Also vying for the 10 slots at stake for the world championship are representatives from China, India and the former Soviet republics.

"Competition here is a lot tougher than the Asian Zonals, which also serves as qualifiers," said Torre. "In our zone, our strongest opponents are the Vietnamese, Indonesians and Mongolians."

Torre also competed in the 2000 Asian Men's in Calcutta, India, and barely missed a slot to the world championship when he settled for a draw instead of going for a win in his final game.

Like Torre, the only Filipino to have advanced to the World quarterfinals (against Hungarian GM Zoltan Ribli), Villamayor and Antonio have also qualified for the World championship. Both earned their spots through the Asian Zonals.

The PSC, through chair Eric Buhain, will shoulder the plane fare of the Filipino players.

Agassi prevails

SAN JOSE, California—Top-seeded Andre Agassi dismantled Italy's Davide Sanguinetti, 6-3, 6-1, to win his fifth Siebel Open title here Sunday, extending his 2003 unbeaten streak to 12 matches.

The 32-year-old American needed only 62 minutes to brush aside the sixth seed and capture the $52,000r winner's check.

Venus wins

ANTWERP, Belgium—Venus Williams beat local favorite Kim Clijsters 6-2, 6-4 to complete back-to-back wins in the $585,000 WTA event here Sunday.

Right move

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

THE CAMPAIGN for the Vietnam SEA Games gold medals in chess is on. Our top wood pushers are set to compete shortly in Doha, Qatar, in a tournament that would stake slots to the World Chess Championship.

But whether or not our chess bets will succeed in Doha, that's not the primary concern. The main reason for this mission is to sharpen our players for the immediate task at hand: The Vietnam SEA Games in December.

I guess Eugene Torre, Asia's first grandmaster, has not lost sight of the saying, "The early bird gets the first worm." Thus our trip to Doha from Feb. 22 to March 22.

Joining Eugene to Doha, which will host the Asian Games in 2006, are his fellow grandmasters Joey Antonio, Bong Villamayor and GM-candidate Mark Paragua.

Eugene & Company are not saying it but I know it just the same: They want to see nothing but the glitter of gold in Hanoi come the SEA Games in December.

I said here a while back that with the Vietnamese deciding to kill golf, billiards and the marathon in the Vietnam Games, we lost a scoop of golds in the biennial meet. Thus, the need to hunt for other gold mines.

It was Eric Buhain, the youthful chair of the Philippine Sports Commission, who started the gold-digging chores. Inspired by no-nonsense advisers, Eric chose chess and dance sport.

"I believe we could score well in both disciplines," he said.

Nobody could have said it better.

Actually, chess' Fab Four today (Torre, Antonio, Villamayor and Paragua) have started the spade work when they competed in the World Chess Olympics. Although they didn't do well in Bled, Slovenia, last year, the seeds of chess renaissance in the country had been sown. Eric played a key role in that joust by giving a substantial subsidy for the trip.

Chess has always been one of our strongest medal winners in international play. It suffered some setbacks in the '80s after its boom decade in the '70s. But it is now about to get its second wind. Thanks mainly to the establishment of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines, mainly through the efforts of Florencio Campomanes, Sammy Estimo and Torre himself, among others.

Let's go get 'em, Eugene. With you at the helm of things, I am confident we will soon recapture the country's old glory in chess.

SSC a win shy of tennis title

UNBEATEN San Sebastian College moved within a win of clinching the National College Athletic Association (NCAA) men's tennis title yesterday following a 2-0 decision over College of St. Benilde at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Former national junior champion Nino Salvador won the first singles over Wilbur Agawin, 6-0, 6-0, before teaming up with Arvin Ruel to beat John Rey Moreno and Juan Vicente Cruz, 6-1, 6-3, in the doubles. The no-bearing second singles match between Michael Tenoria and Juan Vicente Cruz was not played.

Letran remained in the hunt for a back-to-back title when it nipped Philippine Christian University, 2-1, in the other game.

In the juniors division, PCU defeated San Beda, 2-1, while Letran won over College of St. Benilde, 3-0.

CHAMP

Enzo Pastor is all smiles after being crowned the "International Driver of the Year for the Asian Formula Renault Series" by the Automobile Association of the Philippines. He will rejoin the Asian Formula 3 this year in his bid to hone his skills for the Formula One.

Palaro billeting venues inspected

By Marc Anthony Reyes

SOCIAL Welfare Sec. Dinky Soliman has lauded the peace-keeping initiatives done by Lanao del Norte, site of the 2003 Palarong Pambansa slated May 4-11 in Tubod.

Despite the on-going war in Pikit, North Cotabato, Soliman said she was impressed by the "harmonious co-existence among Muslims and Christians" when she went to the province's progressive towns like Tubod, site of the P500 million Mindanao Civic Center, and Munai, where she opened livelihood and infrastructure projects.

"Lanao del Norte is a conducive place to live in, otherwise, these funding agencies won't invest in this province," said Soliman.

Meanwhile, the Palarong Pambansa billeting committee has already conducted inspection of the schools which will serve as billeting venues for the expected 1,000 student athletes and officials, who will take part in the Games.

Committee chair Rogelio Aguaviva said they are working hand in hand with the regional Department of Education to make minor repairs and sprucing up in the schools situated in eight coastal towns near Tubod.

Mandaluyong hosts super showdown

BIGSHOTS from the United Cockers Association of the Philippines (Ucap), Luzon Gamecock Breeders Association (LGBA) and the National Cockers Association (NCA) clash in a rare super showdown today via the "5th Ucap 7-Cock Derby" at Mandaluyong Coliseum.

Today's hosts are hotelier-sportsman Biboy Enriquez and top Palawan gamefowl breeder Mauro Prieto. Sponsors are Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer, Sagupaan Mite Free Shampoo, Complexor 3000 and Washout Shampoo of Lakpue Drug Inc.

Ucap's frontrunners are *sabong* idol Patrick Antonio, former ambassador Danding Cojuangco, Sonny Lagon, Ucap president Raymond Velayo, Butch Macasaet, Jet Fernando, Mario Villamor, lawyer Ram Lopez, OPMI president Vic Yu, Alan Tan and Nelson Co.

For details, contact 531-4003, 531-4005, 534-4110 and 535-2341.

TaylorMade

LEGEND TEE IN SUBIC

Shirley Boey (center), chair of the 2nd Legend Tee set for Feb. 22 at the Subic Bay Golf & Country Club, receives some of the equipment donated by Taylor Made-adidas from Ernest Pagula, golf business unit manager of TMaG. Witnessing the event are TMaG's April Gemora, Rosette Martin and Jon Legarda-So. ROMY HOMILLADA

Southwoods hosts FG today; tight battle up

ARROYO

THE FIRST Gentleman's Professional Golf Circuit goes to the Manila Southwoods today with Richard Sinfuego as the new Order of Merit leader.

Mars Pucay, the double-leg winner Mizuno pro, is second and Cassius Casas, the circuit's Mr. Heartbreak Kid, third.

Casas had been in contention every week in 2003 but he could only produce a playoff victory at Del Monte and four second-place finishes.

Only last week, Casas lost to Sinfuego at the Orchard.

If there's one thing going for Casas, it is that Southwoods is his home course.

But Casas needs a strong final-day performance if he is to grab the elusive OOM leadership of the revived circuit bankrolled by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo's foundation and San Miguel Beer and organized by the Federation of Golf Clubs Philippines.

The circuit is definitely not ending at Southwoods, an assurance given by Ben Abalos, the Comelec chair who is also serving as commissioner of the Professional Golfers Association of the Philippines.

Abalos said that another leg at the Camp John Hay in Baguio has been firmed up for next month, with two more additional legs at the Mimosa and Luisita to complete a Northern Luzon swing.

Sinfuego's one-stroke win over Casas last week made him the fourth two-leg victor in the series also supported by WG&A Super Ferry.

Casas, Benjie Magada and Pucay are the other two-leg champions.

All four will be chasing for No. 3 in a showdown that will get them ready for the big battle coming at The Country Club, a tourney which is not part of the First Gentleman's Circuit but is staking P1 million as the winner's prize.

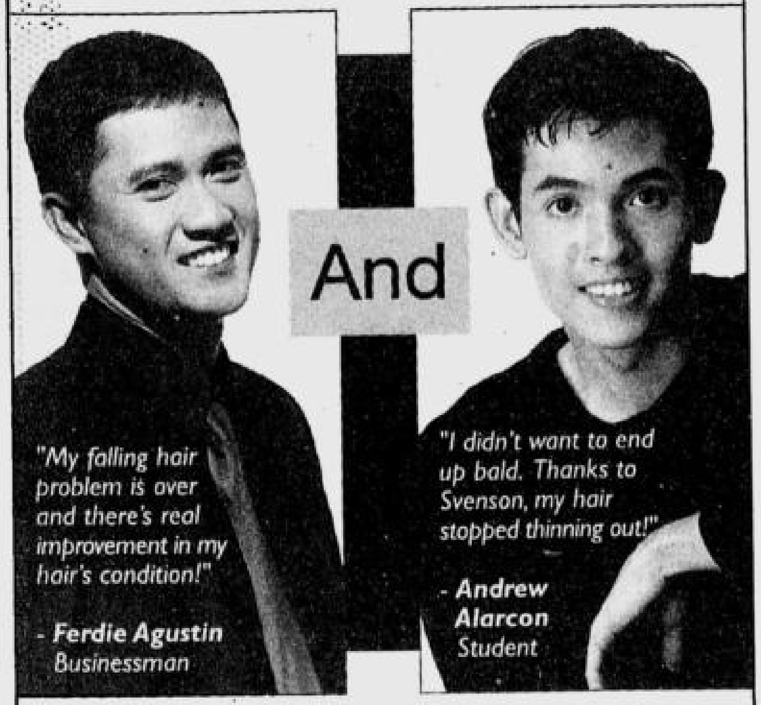
Danny Zarate and Angelo Que are not playing since they will be in Malaysia for the Asian PGA Tour.

Jong Arcano

The Order of Merit

1.	R. Sinfuego	P455,000
2.	M. Pucay	P391,750
3.	C. Casas	P388,750
4.	B. Magada	P312,500
5.	A. Lascuna	P264,750
6.	R. Pagunsan	P230,000
7.	R. Pactolerin	P227,125
8.	E. Salvador	P212,000
9.	A. Que	P169,250
10.	R. Cuello	P159,750
11.	D. Delos Santos	P157,750
12.	R. Sasutil	P149,000
13.	C Villaroman	P146,000
14.	V. Santia	P145,750
15.	E. Bagtas	P140,250

MARS PUCAY: Out to recapture Merit leadership. PDI PHOTO



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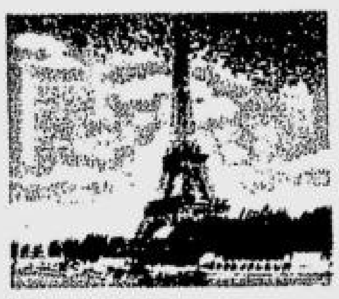

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Bus operators dare BF; 169 buses held

THIS is Edsa at 10:30 a.m. Monday—the first day of the traffic scheme which Bayani Fernando imposed on all public utility vehicles.
JOAN BONDOC

By Leila Salaverria

THE BUS operators' last-ditch appeal for compassion, so that they would be spared from the "number-coding" traffic scheme this week, fell on deaf ears after traffic enforcers apprehended over a hundred buses for violating the Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program yesterday.

Of the 214 violators apprehended as of 2 p.m yesterday, 169 were passenger buses. Metro Manila Development Authority officials also caught 15 jeepneys, 8 taxis and 5 FX taxis. Seventeen private vehicles were also held in Mandaluyong and Makati, the only cities in Metro Manila where the UVVRP is still imposed.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando yesterday defended anew his decision, saying the experiment of putting all public utility vehicles under the UVVRP would only last for a week and should be given a chance so that the MMDA could logically sort out the traffic situation in the metropolis.

He also hit the bus operators for complaining that they were never consulted by the MMDA, and insisting that they are supposed to be exempted from the UVVRP.

"There was also an agreement before that bus operators would reduce by 10 percent the number of buses deployed, which was never followed by the operators," he told reporters yesterday. "They are fielding as many buses as they can muster."

Fernando added that the decision to include the PUVs under the UVVRP had been approved by Metro Manila mayors—as the meeting's minutes would show—and that he had made the decision public.

MMDA General Manager Robert Nacianceno said that even if no written directive was issued, the MMDA would implement any lawful order, "even the verbal ones."

So throughout the week, the MMDA would continue to apprehend all public utility vehicles violating the UVVRP, he added.

According to Traffic Director Angelito

BUS/ A24

Private cars are next

AFTER imposing the number-coding scheme on public utility vehicles for a week, Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando would be doing the same thing to private vehicles next week.

As a result, he would seek a one-week extension of the suspension period of the Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program in Metro Manila during his next meeting with the Metro Manila Council.

The three-week UVVRP trial suspension would end on Friday, Feb. 21.

"(Next week) I want to implement the number-coding scheme only on private vehicles," Fernando told reporters in his weekly news conference yesterday.

He explained that he wants to see how traffic would be like if the UVVRP were imposed exclusively on private vehicles.

He said he would like to compare the result to the traffic flow when the UVVRP was imposed only on public utility vehicles.

He added that he first imposed the number-coding scheme exclu-

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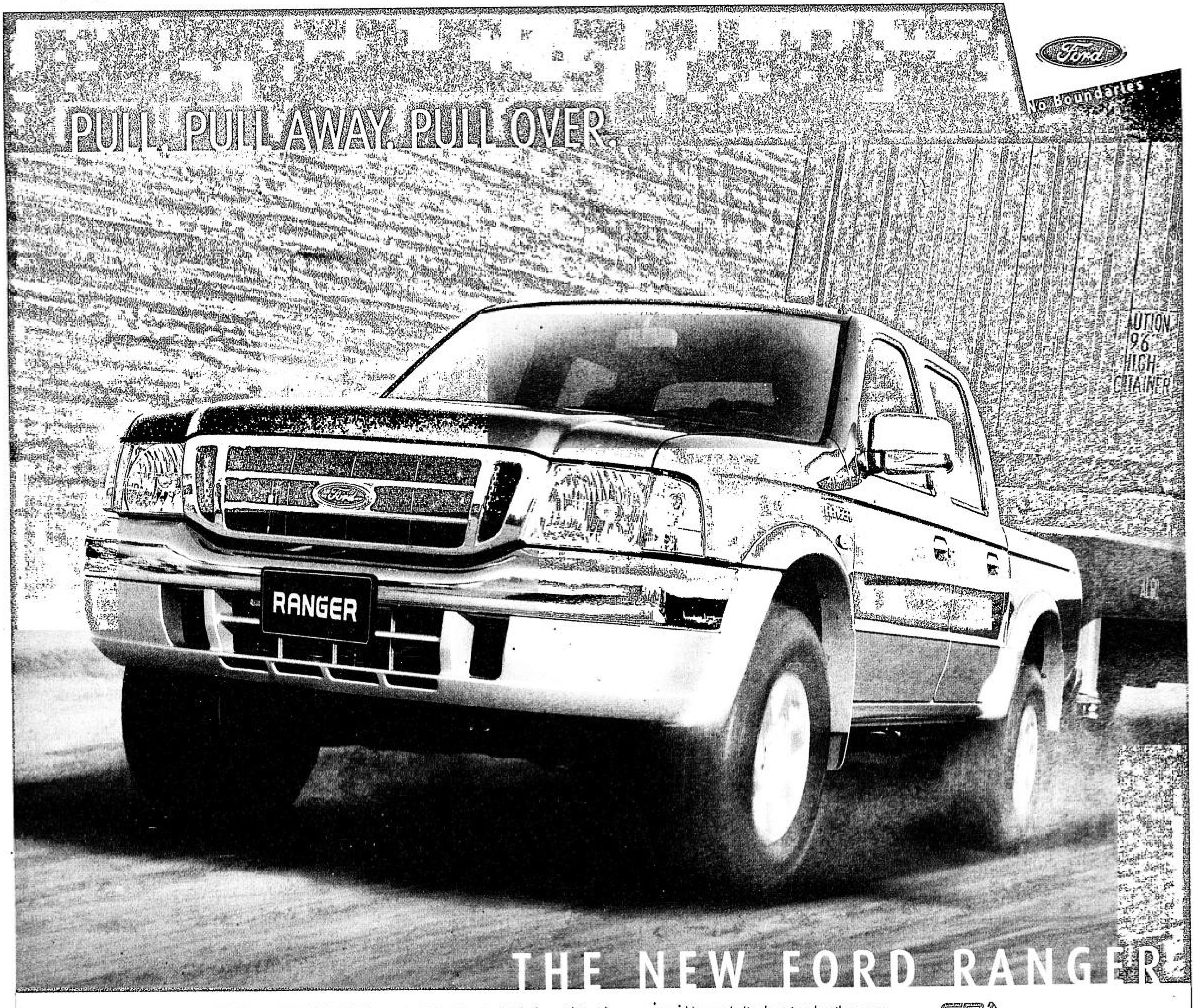
FEB 18 TUESDAY



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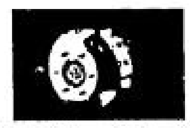
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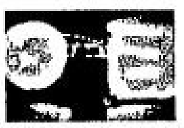
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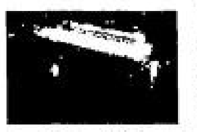
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Strunk won't get death in case of conviction

STRUNK

By Philip Tubeza

ROGER Lauren Strunk might not be sentenced to death, even if he were convicted of the murder of his wife, actress Nida Blanca, a National Bureau of Investigation official said yesterday.

Lawyer Ricardo Diaz, NBI-Interpol chief, said that the Philippines may decide to extend the assurance that Strunk will not be executed so that the United States will allow his extradition.

"The President can issue a guarantee that the death penalty will not be imposed in (Strunk's) case," Diaz said. "A death sentence will automatically be commuted."

Some have expressed fears that the United States would not allow Strunk's extradition because he is charged with murder—a capital offense, making him eligible for the death penalty.

Strunk is an American citizen.

But Diaz said that the President's assurance might not even be needed because the administration has already stopped the imposition of capital punishment on death row inmates.

He noted that many states in the United States also have the death penalty.

He said the request for an assurance is natural between countries with extradition treaties.

Diaz cited the example of Tootsie Espina—a police official's daughter—who is facing double murder charges in the US.

He said the Philippines is also asking the US for a guarantee that Espina would not be executed if she were found guilty.

Espina, now detained at the NBI jail, is now fending off in local courts the Americans' request for her extradition.

The Department of Justice last week decided to file murder charges against Strunk and Philip Medel Jr. before the Pasig Regional Trial Court.

Diaz said he is confident that the court would side with the DOJ and issue an arrest warrant against Strunk.

Once a warrant has been issued, the Philippines can formally ask the US to extradite Strunk.

On Saturday, Strunk's lawyers vowed to use "all legal avenues" to block the trial of Blanca's former husband.

In a 36-page resolution, the DOJ panel found probable cause to indict the two, based on Medel's confession.

Medel, who earlier owned up to the crime, had asked the panel to junk the murder complaint because it was allegedly based on his original affidavit, which he had already recanted. Diaz said that it usually takes a week for the court to review the DOJ and decide whether there is probable cause for the case to proceed, or if there should be a reinvestigation.

DoJ still has no case, Strunk lawyer claims

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE LAWYERS of Roger Lawrence Strunk are out to demolish the murder case lodged against their client by exploiting the alleged failure of the justice department to uncover the motive behind the killing of actress Nida Blanca.

"What is the motive?" asked Strunk lawyer Alma Mallonga.

Mallonga said in an interview that motive "per se" was not indispensable to the successful prosecution of the murder case lodged against Strunk and Phillip Medel Jr. before the Pasig Regional Trial Court.

The motive, she said, "becomes irrelevant" if the DOJ had established Strunk's involvement.

But in this case, she said, there has to be a motive in light of the "incompetent evidence" the Department of Justice used to rule against Strunk and Medel.

Mallonga claimed that most of the evidence cited by the two-man DOJ panel were "hearsay."

Asked to comment on Mallonga's statements, Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño said: "That's already the merits of the case."

Zuño said that should Strunk decide to seek a reconsideration with the DOJ, "it's up for the panel to evaluate (and) go over the motion."

Mallonga told the INQUIRER yesterday that the DOJ failed to file the case as announced on Friday.

Zuño said that the case was filed only yesterday afternoon. The case is expected to be raffled off on Thursday.

Mallonga also said that Strunk's lawyers would still ask the DOJ to reconsider its decision.

Next up: Private cars

From page A23

sively on PUVs because they were the first to call for the return of the UVVRP, citing heavy traffic congestion and loss of income.

"It's a case of 'you and your big mouth,'" he said.

He also said that even if there are more private vehicles than buses on the road, it's the buses who constantly stay on the road.

Yesterday, MMDA officials said traffic was generally lighter on Edsa, except in Kamias and Ortigas, which are traditionally problem areas. Yesterday was the first day of the UVVRP imposition on all PUVs.

The UVVRP was suspended beginning Feb. 3 in the whole of Metro Manila, except Makati. Recently, Mandaluyong reimposed the scheme, saying traffic in the city has become unmanageable.

Leila Salaverria

Bomb found in GMA route to Caloocan

By Tina Santos

A BOMB in a cleverly gift-wrapped box was found in front of a gate of a Caloocan City school that President Macapagal-Arroyo was supposed to visit late yesterday afternoon, according to the police.

The apparent attempt on the President's life was foiled when the police found the bomb and disposed it.

According to PO2 Ernesto Ablaza of the Police Community Precinct 3, vendor Violy Lipangco found the bomb contained in a cigarette box at about 3:30 p.m. at the gate of the GSIS High School in Pangarap Village, near the Caloocan City's boundary with San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan.

Ablaza said President Arroyo was on one of her unannounced presidential sorties in the depressed communities of the city. The police were earlier sent to secure the route the presidential entourage would be taking on its way to its destination.

Upon the discovery of the bomb, bystanders immediately informed the police.

The bomb was safely detonated by members of the Special weapons and Tactics unit's bomb disposal squad. SWAT bomb experts have yet to determine the type of the explosive that was found.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, February 18, 2003
6th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Gen 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10
Gospel: Mk 8:14-21

The disciples had forgotten to bring more bread and had only one loaf with them in the boat. Then Jesus warned them, "Keep your eyes open and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod." And they said to one another, "He saw that we have no bread."

Aware of this, Jesus asked them, "Why are you talking about the loaves you are short of? Do you not see or understand? Are your minds closed? Have you eyes that don't see and ears that don't hear? And do you not remember when I broke the five loaves among five thousand? How many baskets full of leftovers did you collect?" They answered, "twelve." "And having seven loaves for the four thousand, how many wicker baskets of leftovers did you collect?" They answered, "seven." Then Jesus said to them, "Do you still not understand?"

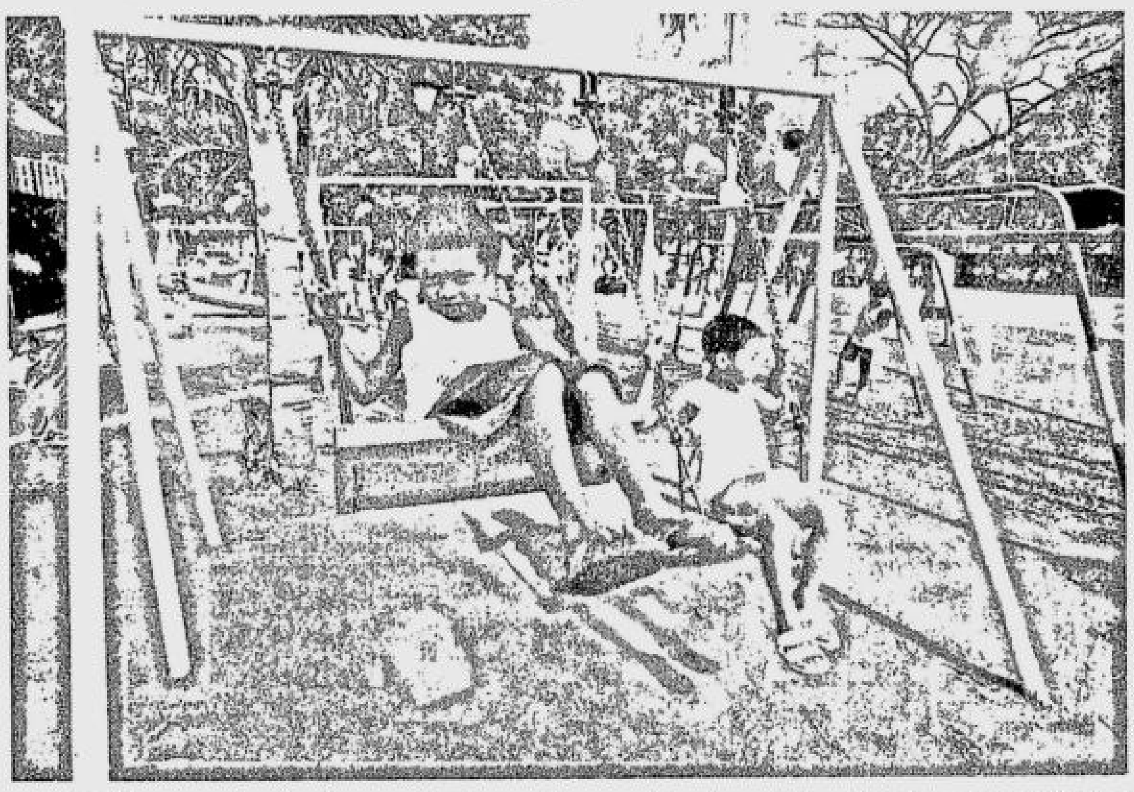
Commentary

Jesus warns the crowds of the malice in looking for sin in one's neighbor. "Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." He said, "There is nothing covered that will not be uncovered, and nothing hidden that will not be made known. What I am telling you in the dark, you must speak in the light. What you hear in private, proclaim from the housetops" (Mt 10:26-27). By seeking to find fault in my neighbor, and by being happy when I have found it, I myself have lost the most precious treasure of all: charity—that virtue which the Lord proclaimed most beautiful and valuable.

Jesus, weaken my habit of criticism till it fades away, and strengthen in me the art of praise.

A park closes, another opens in Manila

By Jerome Aning


CHILDREN get to enjoy the playground at the newly opened Paraiso ng Batang Maynila park on Adriatico Street.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

THERE is a paradise regained in Manila.

After the Arroceros Park was closed over a bitter dispute involving the local government and an environmental group, another has opened its gates to the public.

The once-dreaded Paraiso ng Batang Maynila Park on the corner of Quirino Avenue and Adriatico Street, in Malate, Manila, has been extensively renovated and now resembles the small parks found in exclusive villages in Metro Manila.

The decades-old Paraiso had gone to seed because of neglect. What speeded up the park's deterioration, according to Manila Mayor Atienza, was the fact that it was fenced in, making it inaccessible and unwelcome to residents in the area.

For some years, the park had virtually become a no-man's land and the favorite hangout of drug addicts and criminals preying on commuters and pedestrians at the Quirino-Adriatico intersection.

Development began three years ago when City Hall installed new play equipment such as slides, swings and monkey bars.

Late last year, Atienza ordered the concrete fence surrounding the park torn down to provide unfettered access.

A new layout was also provided for the the park. The nearby Plaza Asuncion south of the Paraiso was added to the park.

The Paraiso has been landscaped and pathways and lights installed, with gazebos and park benches placed in various places.

There is now also a covered basketball-volleyball court.

The north side has been turned into a gateball court. Senior citizens like to play the sport which is a combination of golf and hockey.

Plaza Asuncion also now has a food court, with stalls selling snacks and meals at affordable prices.

Various species of fully grown trees have also been planted around the park.

"We have added new trees in the park to provide shade," Atienza said. "This shows that City Hall is very committed to the enhancement of the environment of open spaces in Manila."

The mayor said the location of the park is ideal, being right in front of the Manila Zoo and near the Our Lady of Assumption Church.

"The park will now be open for the use, enjoyment and recreation of the residents in the area, especially the children," Atienza said.

The redevelopment of the park is the city's latest physical improvement project under the Buhayin ang Maynila program.

But critics say that instead of beautification, the mayor should focus more on poverty alleviation, employment generation and the peace and order problem in the capital.

During a tour with the mayor at the park, reporters were confronted with the spectacle of dozens of dirty, tatter-dressed and hungry urchins who come from nearby slum areas.

"The mayor is going to give us food," they said over and over, and followed Atienza and the mediamen in their tour of the park.

This led one reporter to quip that the children were probably just playing to forget their hunger and that the park has instead become a Paraiso ng Nagugutom na Batang Maynila, or the paradise of hungry Manila children.

MANILA'S Atienza extends ahand to children playing at the park.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

ETHICS (JUDICIAL ETHICS)—Duty of the judge in criminal cases—Any judge should know that before an accused can be convicted of a crime charged, it is essential that he be given the chance to refute the allegations against him in a proper trial on the merits and not simply in a hearing on an incident of the case such as a motion to quash. The Rules of Court prescribe the procedure to be followed in criminal cases and respondent judge was not at liberty to disregard the rules on the flimsy excuse that the peculiarity of the criminal cases required the application of any suitable proceeding in accordance with Section 6 of Rule 135. In the first place, said provision applies only if the procedure to be followed is not specifically governed by law or the rules. This circumstance, however, did not obtain in complainant's case because, assuming that she admitted the charges as respondent judge asserts, Section 3 (e) of Rule 119 should have been applied, to wit: SEC. 3. Order of Trial. (e) However, when the accused admits the act or omission charged in the complaint or information but interposes a lawful defense, the order of trial may be modified accordingly. Conformably, a modified order of trial is authorized whenever an accused admits the charge but interposes a lawful defense. This does not mean, however, that in such a case, trial could be dispensed with altogether. A judge must nonetheless ascertain whether the defense put up by the accused could withstand judicial scrutiny. In other words, while the burden of evidence is shifted to the accused to prove by clear and convincing evidence that he is entitled to an extenuating circumstance, the trial court is still duty-bound to establish that the accused, in fact, did not incur any liability relative to his admission. Needless to say, a regular trial on the merits is necessary for this purpose. Furthermore, it was not for respondent judge to unilaterally determine that the entire case was submitted for decision without giving complainant the opportunity to submit, or at the very least, manifest if she had additional evidence to prove her innocence. Granting that complainant was accorded the chance to offer proof as to the alleged payment in support of her motion to dismiss, it remained incumbent upon respondent judge to notify complainant that the case will be decided on the merits. An accused in a criminal case must not be precluded from availing of every option allowed by the rules to adduce evidence in his defense. In this case, respondent judge deprived complainant of this opportunity when she adopted procedural shortcuts and decided the criminal cases without conducting a trial on the merits. [Citations omitted.] [Resolution, Justice Ynares-Santiago, First Division, Dayawon v. Garfin, [A.M. No. MTJ-01-1367. Sept. 5, 2002]

DIGEST BY R. B. VERA

Bus operators dare BF; 169 buses held

From page A23

Vergel De Dios, an apprehended PUV driver would be fined P300. If the driver chooses to continue to ply the roads despite being issued a violation ticket, that driver could be apprehended and fined again.

Fernando also said bus operators should not be so quick in saying they would lose income because of the UVVRP. He said it's not the number of trips but the number of passengers in a bus that would determine how much the buses make.

He earlier said that there are too many buses on the road that are not getting filled to capacity, hence his decision to reduce their number.

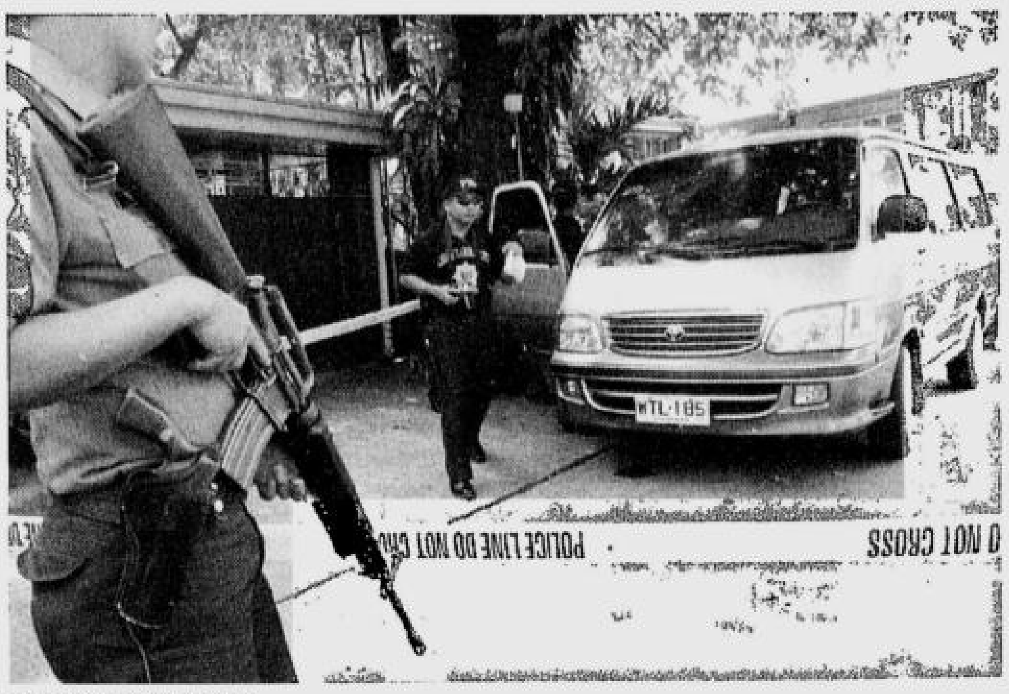
Meanwhile, members of the Metro Manila Bus Operators Association (MMBOA) yesterday trooped to the MMDA office to complain about colorum buses that have been making a big dent on their income.

"With or without color-coding, it's the colorum vehicles that are making things hard for us," MMBOA president Ramon Castillo said.

Bert Suansing, secretary general of the Confederation of Land Transportation Organizations of the Philippines, who was with the group, said it's the big bus companies like the members of MMBOA who compete with colorum buses that take to the roads everyday.

The bus operators urged Fernando to step in and stop the proliferation of colorum and out-of-line buses.

Ang ganda-ganda niya! Darna!



PASIG BANK JOB
Police recover the getaway vehicle that the bank robbers reportedly used to pull off a heist at the PBCom bank branch on Pioneer Street in Mandaluyong City yesterday. Investigators found two black bonnets inside the vehicle, which was found abandoned on San Rafael Street in Barrio Kapitolyo, Pasig.
JOAN BONDOC

Suspected bank robbers fall

By Christian Esguerra

TWO OF the eight robbers who stormed a Parañaque bank last week were arrested Sunday night in Iloilo, following a tip from fishermen.

Suspects Marco Lanada, 22, and his brother, Philip, 21, could have escaped to Negros on board a boat had not fishermen reported their suspicious movements to the local police, Insp. Rolando Gregorio, Iloilo police chief in Banate, said in a press conference yesterday.

Quoting fishermen, the officer said strangers did not usually hire boats at the Banate port.

Gregorio said that right after the Lanada brothers were accosted at the port at around 6 p.m., they admitted that they were part of the group that took nearly P1 million from Prudential Bank in Sucat.

Marco allegedly got P50,000 from the loot.

The fishermen would receive part of the P100,000-reward Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez had put up for his arrest. The rest of the money would go to the local police, according to Gregorio.

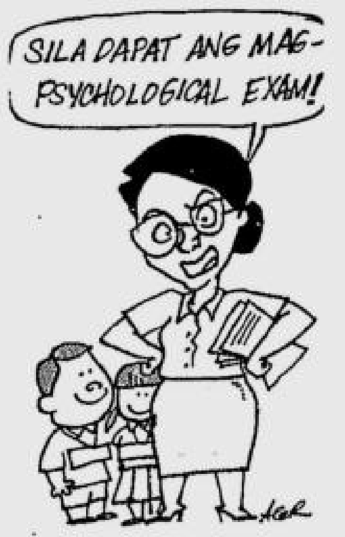
Southern Police District officials yesterday subjected the Lanada brothers to tactical interrogation to determine the whereabouts of the remaining members of the robbery group.

Judging by the way the robbers carried out the heist, Parañaque police chief Rolando Estilles said they could be part of a highly organized syndicate operating in Metro Manila.

He noted that the group had members assigned to enter and scoop money from the bank's vault, organize traffic outside for easy escape, and man another escape route in a nearby Las Piñas subdivision.

Hours before the heist, Marco allegedly stole his employer's Toyota Lite Ace van, which was one of at least three getaway vehicles the robbers used.

Councilor wants public teachers to undergo psychological testing


SILA DAPAT ANG MAG-PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAM!

By Jerome Aning

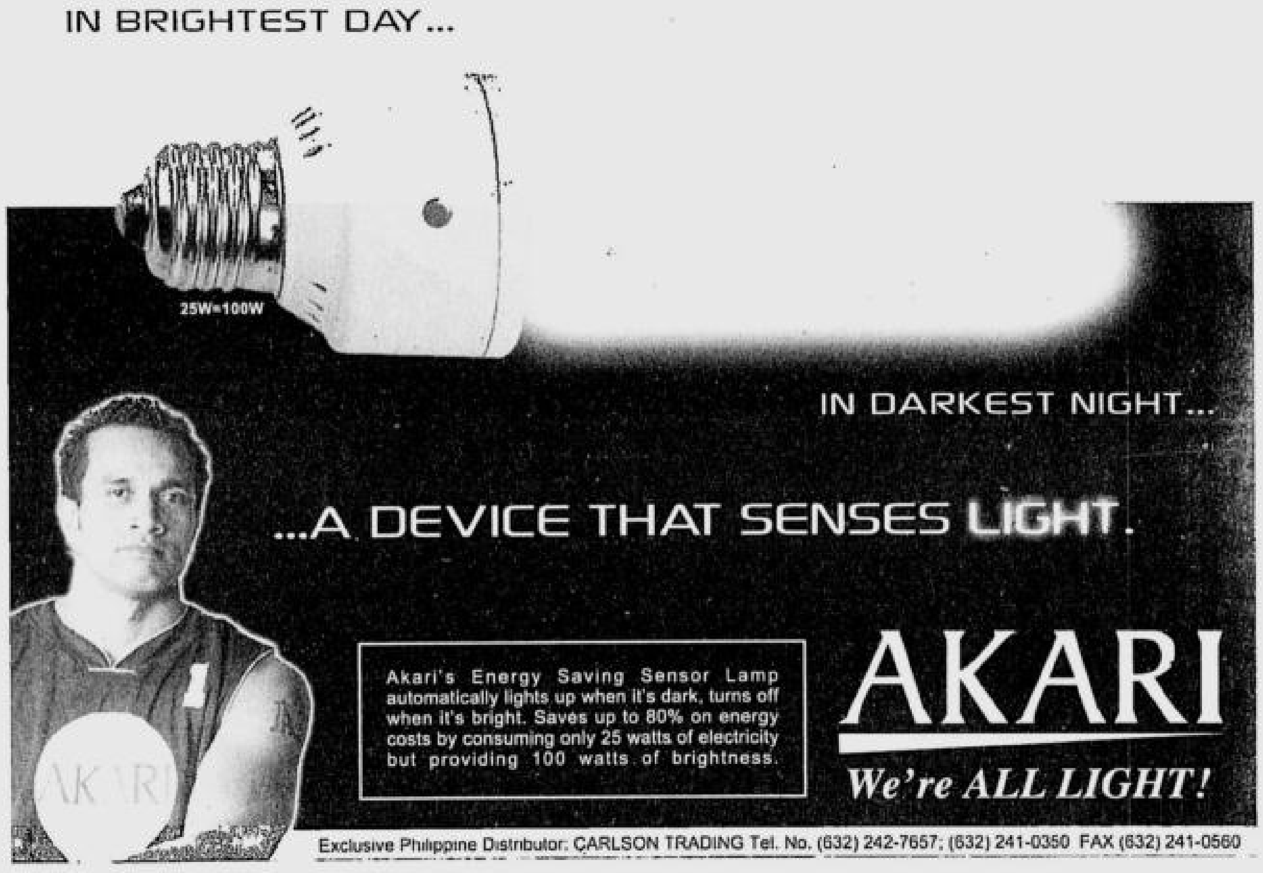
A MANILA councilor yesterday urged Congress to require public school teachers to undergo psychological examination and assessment before being given teaching jobs.

Councilor Don Ramon Bagatsing said sound public policy "requires that the State should ensure not only the intellectual competency of applicants to the teaching profession but also their emotional and psychological stability."

Psychological and emotional stability is very important because teachers exercise special parental authority over their students' mental, emotional, spiritual and psychological development.

The 4th district alderman specifically wants Congress to amend Section 15 of Republic Act No. 7836, or the Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994, by requiring psychological testing for applying teachers.

"To further strengthen the regulatory power of the State over the teaching profession, by prescribing an additional requirement for the practice thereof, falls within the bounds of propriety and necessity," he said.



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Ping Lacson's reputation

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

ANYTIME now, as soon as it has gathered enough courage, the Supreme Court will come out with the decision ordering the lower courts to go ahead in trying Sen. Panfilo Lacson et al. for multiple murders.

The case stems from the gangland-style rubout of 11 alleged members of the Kuratong Baleleng robbery gang by a police unit from the defunct Presidential Anti-Crime Commission (PACC) led by Lacson in 1995.

The high court ruled last year that it was up to the lower courts to decide whether to try the multiple murder case. Defense lawyers had argued that the period within which to file the case had lapsed.

* * *

But the high tribunal reversed itself after the Office of the Solicitor General and prosecution lawyers asked it to reconsider its decision. The ruling on whether Lacson and company should be tried should come from the high court and not from a lower court, according to the petition.

Now, the decision is definite: The multiple murder case against Lacson et al. has not lapsed; therefore, they should be tried.

Finally, the Supreme Court justices have gotten back their balls.

* * *

In a couple of days, according to my mole at the Supreme Court, the case will be remanded to the lower courts.

This means that the lower court assigned to try the case will issue warrants of arrest for Lacson and his co-accused.

And since murder is a non-bailable offense, the senator will be forced to take a vacation from the Senate and stay in jail for the duration of the trial.

* * *

There is an airtight case against Lacson and company, according to my sources in the Philippine National Police (PNP).

Although the whistle-blower, SPO2 Eduardo delos Reyes, has recanted his statement against Lacson et al., there are a couple of other policemen-witnesses who will testify against them. These policemen-witnesses, now in the protection of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP), say they received orders from Lacson himself to execute the 11 suspected bank robbers.

My PNP sources said that there are strong pieces of evidence that would pin down the senator and his co-accused. Among them are the M-16 Armalite rifles supposedly found beside the bodies of the victims. The rifles, my sources said, belong to the PNP, in short, they were "planted."

* * *

One of those who supposedly asked Delos Reyes to recant his statement, a retired police colonel, said that the erstwhile whistle-blower was not paid off to change his story.

This retired colonel said that he and others belonging to a group called "Crisis Management Group" within the PNP dissuaded Delos Reyes from recanting his statement in order "not to rock the boat."

"Mon, Delos Reyes never received a single centavo from us. He is an honest man. He was forced to denounce his colleagues in the Kuratong case because he couldn't stand a lie," he said.

In that case, Colonel, Delos Reyes lied when he recanted his statement against Lacson. Oh, well...!

* * *

Lacson's reputation or notoriety is such that even justices of the high court are afraid of him.

The high court's controversial ruling last year to leave it to the lower courts to decide whether the filing of the "Kuratong" multiple murder case had expired was reached only after a stormy session among the justices.

My mole in the high court said that the *ponente* or the justice who wrote the decision had a shouting match with his fellow justices over his sudden turnaround.

* * *

The *ponente*, according to the mole, was very in favor of having Lacson et al. undergo trial. But he had a sudden change of mind, said my source. He now wanted the case dismissed.

His sudden turnaround angered the other justices in his committee. One justice accused the ponente of succumbing to outside pressure. That accusation set off a bitter exchange of words between the ponente and the other justice.

The result of that bitter quarrel is that the high tribunal came out with a wishy-washy decision on the "Kuratong" case last year. A *bakla* ruling, as one lawyer-friend said.

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Makati public schools launch 'Read to Me' campaign

MAKATI'S public schools are set to revive the story reading and storytelling tradition of our well-loved "Lola Basyang". But this time, the goal is not only to teach Filipino values and traditions or to entertain children at bedtime.

The Department of Education Division of Makati (DepEd Makati) is launching "Read To Me", a program a designed to develop students' love for reading, while also enriching their vocabulary and exposing them to information and fun-filled English and Filipino literature for children.

TV and stage personality Luisito "Kuya Bodjie" Pascua, who became every kid's elder brother in the educational TV show "Batibot", will lead the story-reading session during the launching of the campaign on Feb 18 at the Rizal Elementary School in Pembo, Makati. He will be joined by a teacher and student representative of DepEd Makati who will take turns reading adventure-filled stories laden with moral lessons for grade schoolers.

DepEd's National Capital Region Director Dr. Corazon Santiago, will deliver an inspirational message during the program with the theme "Enriching Life Through Reading."

Makati DepEd Superintendent Elena R. Ruiz said the "Read To Me" campaign was designed as a follow-up to the reading skills tests given in October and November last year to some 4,000 Grade Four pupils from 27 of Makati's public elementary schools.

"The reading literacy progressive assessment conducted by EduQuest, Makati's partner educational technology consulting company, has given our school administrators and teachers vital baseline data on such areas as our students' word comprehension and reading vocabulary," Ruiz said.

"Guided by this information, we will now be able to use 'Read To Me' and other strategies to improve our children's reading skills and track their progress, while also exposing them to enriching literature."

"It is very important that every student develops the skill in reading as it is considered a fundamental skill in becoming functional, participative, and involved in a dynamically changing society," EduQuest general manager Teresita Medado added.

All of Makati's 29 public elementary schools will be participating in the "Read To Me" reading sessions to be held every Saturday, all through February and the whole month of March.

PRSP BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEET

The Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP) board of directors for 2002 met recently to discuss the final program of their term – the 38th Anvil Awards Presentation, the Anvil is an annual event dubbed as the 'Oscar' of the local PR practice. It is slated on Friday, Feb. 21 at the Grand Ballroom of the InterContinental Manila at 6 p.m. Shown seated from left: treasurer Reynalita M. Manuel-Santana, Quezon Power (Philippines) Limited Co.; adviser Evelyn M. del Rosario, APR, PLDT Company; external VP Juris Umali-Soliman, Cemex Philippines; director Jones T. Campos, APR, Globe Telecom Inc.; secretary Carmencita G. Arce, GMA Network Inc.; internal VP Ma. Victoria C. Medina, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation. Standing from left: past president and ex-officio general Honesto M. Isleta, APR, Filipino War Veterans Foundation; internal auditor Joel P. Palacios, SSS; director Bernard G. Bagaman, San Miguel Corporation; and president Winston A. Marbella, APR, Marbella International Business Consultancy. Not in photo is director Edgar U. Timbungco, San Miguel Corporation.

PARTNERS IN FAMILY WELLNESS

The Well-Family Midwife Clinics Partnerships Foundation, Inc. (WPFI) recently inaugurated its new office at the West Trade Center along West Avenue in Quezon City. WFMCs are neighborhood clinics providing affordable, quality and convenient family planning and maternal and child health services to lower and middle-income Filipinos. One of its missions is to help decongest government health centers so the latter can focus on serving the more indigent population. With 217 clinics in 8 regions nationwide, all midwife-owned and managed, WPFI partners are providing all-out support to establish a strong and sustainable organization of midwives. During the launching, Dr. Carlos Calica and Ma. Ellen Francisco (from left) of DKT Philippines Inc. hand a check to Dr. Warlito Vicente, chair of the Well-Family Midwife Partnership Foundation (WFPI) to create a revolving fund and ensure the supply of family planning commodities to Well-Family Midwife Clinics nationwide.

Website for Pinoy hair transplantation launched

BEVERLY HILLS trained Filipino hair transplantation experts from the Andrew Pineda Hair Clinics have launched the clinics' official Internet website via www.pinedahair.com.ph.

In an official statement, the company said that the move is geared towards beefing up and widening its market reach nationwide and worldwide, as it promotes hair transplantation as one of the most effective and permanent solutions to hair loss problems affecting both men and women around the world.

According to the company spokesperson Dr. Andrew Pineda, more than 2000 balding Filipinos are now free from psychosocial anxiety and psychological depression, with their newly restored hair transplants boosting their self-image and self-identity.

Dr. Pineda is a member of the International Society of Hair Restoration Surgeons, trained in the US specializing in natural hair restoration, and underwent an extensive four-year study under notable hair transplant surgeons from New York, Chicago, San Francisco, San Diego and Beverly Hills.

His clinics are located at Suite 611 Medical Towers, Herrera St., Legaspi Village, Makati City (813-0691) and at the 2nd floor, Galaxy Shopping Arcade, Illustre Street, Davao City (221-2682).

Lourdes School '78 homecoming

THE LOURDES School QC silver jubilarians of Class 1978 invite all graduates of Lourdes School Quezon City to join them in the celebration of their 25th Silver Jubilee celebration as they host the 2003 grand alumni homecoming on Feb. 22 at the High School Grounds. Titled "Come to Think of It..25 Years na Pala??!!", co-celebrant is the high school class of 1973. Registration starts at 4 p.m. followed by a homecoming mass officiated by Rev. Fr. Troy Delos Santos OFM Cap., Provincial of the Capuchins in the Philippines. A highlight is the presentation by Class '78 of an outdoor all-weather illuminated announcement board to the school. Call the Alumni Office and look for high school principal Reggie De Guzman at 731-1777 loc 221, grade school principal Cesar Aunario at 731-5127 loc 104, or alumni president Jojo Buenaventura at 0918-9236851.

WACOAL OPENS NEW HEAD OFFICE

TV host/celebrity Sarah Meier cuts the ribbon during the opening of the new head office of Philippine Wacoal Corporation at 3rd floor 6788 Ayala Avenue, Makati City. Assisting Ms Meier is Wacoal president Makoto Kishimoto.

ALBA RESTAURANTE ESPAÑOL AT EASTWOOD

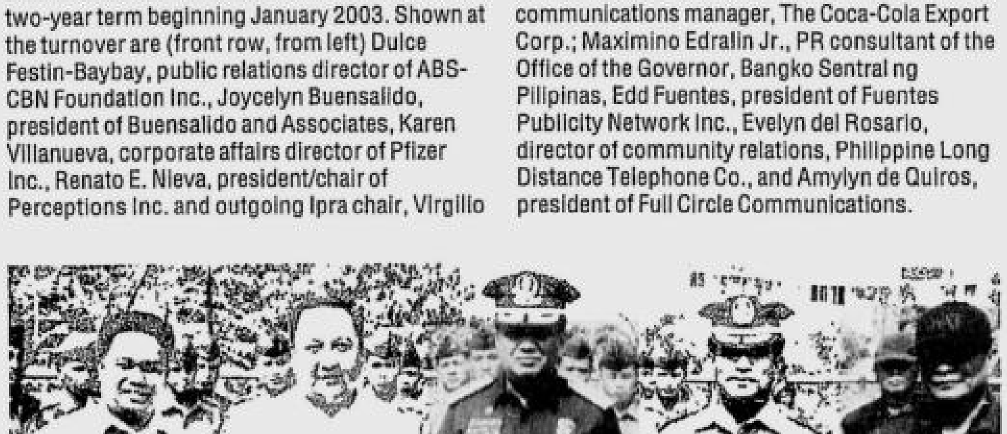
City officials, Spanish food lovers, friends and special guests recently welcomed the opening of Alba Restaurante Español at One Luna Lifestyle Center in Eastwood City, Libis. Photo shows (from left) Pacifico Maghacot, chief officer of the Business Permits and Licenses division of the Municipal of Quezon City; chef Miguel de Alba and wife, Cachelle, Jaime Salvador; and Don Anastacio de Alba doing the ceremonial ribbon-cutting during the inauguration. Alba's Eastwood is the beloved Spanish restaurant's third branch in Metro Manila. Like its counterparts in Polaris St., Makati City and Tomas Morato corner Scout Lozano, Quezon City, it carries a cozy dining ambience that is perfect for family gatherings, intimate dates, business lunches, and night outs with close friends. Authentic Spanish dishes from the original recipes of Don Alba are on the menu plus six exciting new dishes – the solomillo al rico rico (a spin-off of his popular solomillo ala pobre), solomillo toledano, pollo romero, apahap a la navarra, langostinos a la cazuela, and bacalao a la catalana. The restaurant's popular lunch buffet is also offered at the new branch for only P350+. For inquiries and reservation, call 631-2216 to 17.

BURGOS ELECTED NATIONAL CHAIR

Richard P. Burgos (4th from left), Communications Manager of IBM Philippines, was recently elected national chair of the International Public Relations Association for a two-year term beginning January 2003. Shown at the turnover are (front row, from left) Dulce Festin-Baybay, public relations director of ABS-CBN Foundation Inc., Joycelyn Buensalido, president of Buensalido and Associates, Karen Villanueva, corporate affairs director of Pfizer Inc., Renato E. Nieva, president/chair of Perceptions Inc. and outgoing Ipra chair, Virgilio Q. Pantaleon, PR counsel of Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., Romeo P. Virtusio, president/chair of Virtusio Public Relations, Inc. At the back, from left, are Roberto Manzano, communications manager, The Coca-Cola Export Corp.; Maximino Edralin Jr., PR consultant of the Office of the Governor, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Edd Fuentes, president of Fuentes Publicity Network Inc., Evelyn del Rosario, director of community relations, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., and Amylyn de Quiros, president of Full Circle Communications.

Family fishing tourney

AS PART of their participation in the district affair and events, Rotarians of the Rotary Club of Gen. Mariano Alvarez, Cavite, will host their first whole day Family Fun Fishing Tournament and Fellowship for District 3810 at the Fishing Village of Island Cove in Kawit, Cavite on Feb. 23. The event is endorsed and supported by Governor Rosie Go. Hundreds of cultured milkfish (bangus) has been seeded into the fishpond of Island Cove's Fishing Village to ensure all participants will catch fish and have fun. Participation is on a first-come-first-served basis to avoid overcrowding the cordoned area. For details, interested Rotarians of District 3810 can call event chair PE Ady Ocava at 827-4661 or 829-2873.



AMWSLAI DONATION TO EPD

Chief Superintendent Rolando Sacramento (center), director of the Eastern Police District (EPD), welcomes Col. Carlyzar S. Divinagracia (second from left), executive vice president and chief executive officer of the Air Materiel Wing Savings and Loan Association Inc. (AMWSLAI) at the EPD headquarters in Pasig City. The AMWSLAI later donated steel beds, mattresses, and boxing and other sports equipment for the use of the EPD Special Weapons and Tactics Division. Also in photo is Boni Dellomas (left), business development representative of AMWSLAI, and the other EPD officers and personnel.

Arellano High School '48 reunion

IN PREPARATION for the celebration of its 55th anniversary (Emerald Jubilee) on April 27, AHS Class '48 president Ben M. Pangilinan, former Inquirer president, invites his schoolmates to attend the general membership meeting on Feb. 22 at 2 p.m. at the Arellano High School at Doroteo Jose Street, Manila. Interested members can call any of the following: Taling Javier (272-2589), Ludy Espinosa Tesalona (801-9774), Narding de Guzman (922-0243), and Elvie Reyes (362-8194). Attendees should bring a recent 2"x2" photo for inclusion in the Emerald Jubilee souvenir program.

PWU reunion set at Manila Hotel

THE PHILIPPINE Women's University now on its 83rd year will hold its grand reunion on Feb. 22, 1 p.m. at the Manila Hotel with its chair, Dr. Helena Z. Benitez leading the jubilarians.

With the theme "Come Home Philwomenian," the honorees this year are alumni from high school and college with classes ending '03 and '08 since the founding if the institution in 1919.

Olivia "Bubbles" M. Villafuerte, over-all chair of the 2003 reunion is enjoining Philwomenians here and abroad to participate and make this reunion "another historical event in the PWU story."

"In coming home," she noted "you renew old friendships with your classmates, reminisce and recount memorable days with your dear teachers and advisers.

Nilda Rotor, PWU Alumni Association president is likewise enjoining Philwomenians to make themselves count and be part of the grand alumni homecoming.

In heeding the call for participation in the homecoming, the PWU high school class '53 is calling its graduates to get in touch with Alma Belardo (tel. no. 524-8601 or 525-8639), Lilia Mababangloob (831-1190) and Amy Laurea (932-1502).

This year's reunion committee has for its co-chairs Fe Amor Ilagan, Dolly Cruz del Valle and Celia Cuasay.

Officers of the program and arrangements committees are Valentina Bonifacio, Sabrina Villaflor, Harold Galang, Joel Atencio, Charing Villar, Puring Torres, Maricor Malitao and Lermy Concepcion.

Composing the finance/ways and means and invitations committees are Alice Lopena, Grace Buencamino, Dolly del Valle, Celia Espiritu and Jasmin Jocson. The committee for overseas participation is headed by Linda Chincuanco.

For further inquiries please contact tel. nos. 526-8421 loc. 123/124 or 850-9471/807-6979 and look for Marilyn, Rachel, Elaine or Kate.

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G4 GLORIETTA 4
- 1 MAID IN MANHATTAN (ADVANCE SCREENINGS)
- 2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- THX 3 GUARANTEED SEATS HERO 11:40, 1:50, 4:00
- 4 THEY
- 5 THE EYE
- 6 WHITE OLEANDER
- 7 TWO WEEKS NOTICE

GB1 GREENBELT 1
- 1 SWEPT AWAY (EXCLUSIVE) 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30
- 2 MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING 11:50, 1:40, 3:30, 5:20, 7:10, 9:00
- Onstage OGIE ALCASID: OA SA PUSO Feb. 21, 22, 28 & Mar. 1

GB3 GREENBELT 3
- THX 1 MAID IN MANHATTAN (ADVANCE SCREENINGS) 2:40, 2:55, 5:10, 7:25, 9:40
- THX 2 GUARANTEED SEATS SHANGHAI KNIGHTS 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00, 11:30
- 3 GUARANTEED SEATS SWEPT AWAY 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30
- 4 GUARANTEED SEATS HERO 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:25, 11:30
- 5 GUARANTEED SEATS TWO WEEKS NOTICE 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:25, 11:30

ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
- THX 1 MAID IN MANHATTAN (ADVANCE SCREENINGS)
- 2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 3 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 4 THEY
- 5 HERO

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MMTA

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- 4 GOLD (DTS ES) TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 5 GOLD (DOLBY EX) THEY
- 6 GOLD (SDDS) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 7 GOLD (DOLBY EX) THE EYE
- 8 AB NORMAL
- 9 MAGNIFICO
- 10 I SPY

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- 1 MAGNIFICO
- 2
- 3 (DTS)
- 4
- 5
- 6 (DTS)
- Golden Pearl THX HERO

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- 2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 3 MAGNIFICO

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- 2 AB NORMAL
- 3 MAGNIFICO
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- 5 SUKDULAN

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- 1 HERO
- 2 SUKDULAN
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- 6 MAGNIFICO

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www.clickthecity.com.ph (Las Pinas) tel 873.5004

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- 3

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- 2 AB NORMAL
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Gotesco City (Manila) tel 734.8588

- 1 (SDDS) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 4 I SPY
- 5 MAGNIFICO
- 6 AB NORMAL
- 7 (DTS) HERO
- 8 (SDDS) MAID IN MANHATTAN
- 9 (DOLBY) THEY

Gotesco Caloocan tel 362.3508

- 2 RESERVE

Gotesco Grand Central (Caloocan) tel 365.7928

- 1 AB NORMAL
- 2 MAGNIFICO
- 3 BETTER THAN SEX
- 4 (SDDS) HERO
- 5 MAID IN MANHATTAN
- 6 (DOLBY) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 7 (DTS) THEY
- 8 I SPY
- 9 BALAT SIBUYAS

Gotesco Commonwealth tel 951.0082

- 1 MAGNIFICO
- 2 (SDDS) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 3 (DTS) MAID IN MANHATTAN
- 4 (DOLBY) HERO
- 5 AB NORMAL

Gotesco Ortigas tel 656.6795

- 1 MAGNIFICO
- 2 AB NORMAL
- 3 (DTS) HERO
- 4 MAID IN MANHATTAN
- 5 (SDDS) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

Universal

(Manila) tel 733.2470

- 1 AB NORMAL

Sampaguita

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- 2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 3 MAGNIFICO
- 4 THEY

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- 2 MAGNIFICO
- 3 BETTER THAN SEX
- 4 AB NORMAL
- 5 HERO

FRC Cinema

(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)

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- 2

Berma Cinema

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- 2 MAGNIFICO
- 3 (DOLBY DIGITAL) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 4 (SDDS) HERO
- 5 (DTS) TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 6 WHITE OLEANDER
- 7 THEY

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- 1 AB NORMAL
- 2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

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Cinema 2000 Target Mall (Sta. Rosa Laguna) TEL. (049) 837-0826, 534-2185

- 1 MAID IN MANHATTAN (SNEAK PREVIEW)
- 2 AB NORMAL
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- 2 (DTS) THEY
- 3 (DOLBY) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 4 AB NORMAL

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

- 1 MAID IN MANHATTAN (SNEAK PREVIEW)
- 2 (DOLBY) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 3 (DTS) THEY
- 4 AB NORMAL

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

- 1 SUKDULAN
- 2 8 MILE
- 3 (DOLBY) I SPY
- 4

Cinema 2000 MetroTown (Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

- 1 MAGNIFICO
- 2 BELOW
- 3 (DOLBY) HOT CHICCK
- 4 (DTS) TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Magic Star Cinema

(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305

- 1 (DOLBY) TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 2 (DTS) MAGNIFICO
- 3 HOT CHICK

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(Alabang) tel 850.1276

- 1 (SDDS) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 2 AB NORMAL
- 3 (DTS) MAGNIFICO
- 4 BETTER THAN SEX

Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

- 1 (DOLBY) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 2 TRY SEVENTEEN
- 3 (DTS) AB NORMAL
- 4 MAGNIFICO
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(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

- 1 BALAT SIBUYAS
- 2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 3 AB NORMAL

Olivarez Los Baños tel (049) 249.2558

- 1 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 2 THEY
- 3 AB NORMAL

Mega Center Mall

(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

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- 2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
- 3 (DTS) AB NORMAL
- 4 (DOLBY) LORD OF THE RING

Cabuyao

(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

- 1 (DTS) RESERVE
- 2 (DTS) RESERVE

Emperor

(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

- 1 BALAT SIBUYAS
- 2 MAGNIFICO
- 3 AB NORMAL

Fiesta World Mall

(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

- 1 SUKDULAN
- 2 HOT CHICK
- 3 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
- 4 LORD OF THE RING

Jade Cinema

(Angeles City) tel (045)887-5001 TO 03

- 1 (DOLBY EX) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 2 AB NORMAL
- 3 (DTS ES) TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 4 BELOW

Cine Nepo Mall

(Angeles City) te (045) 887-0121

- 1 MAGNIFICO
- 2 AB NORMAL
- 3 (DOLBY) SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 4 (DTS) TWO WEEKS NOTICE

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- 1 SUKDULAN
- 2 MAGNIFICO
- 3 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 4 THEY
- 5 HERO
- 6 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
- 7 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 8 MAID IN MANHATTAN

SM CENTERPOINT
7149622 -7161416

- 1 MAGNIFICO
- 2 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 3 MAID IN MANHATTAN
- 4 BETTER THAN SEX
- 5 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 6 SUKDULAN
- 7 THEY
- 8 HERO
- 9 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
- 10 I SPY

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

- 1 I SPY
- 2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
- 3 SUKDULAN
- 4 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 5 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 6 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
- 7 HERO
- 8 MAID IN MANHATTAN
- 9 MAGNIFICO
- 10 RING (JAPANESE)
- 11 THEY
- 12 BETTER THAN SEX

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

- 1 THEY
- 2 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 3 MAID IN MANHATTAN
- 4 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 5 HERO
- 6 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 7 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
- 8 THE EYE
- 9 SUKDULAN
- 10 MAGNIFICO
- 11 THE EYE
- 12 AB NORMAL COLLEGE

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

- 1 SHANGHAI KNIGTS
- 2 EL CRIMEN DEL PADRE AMARO
- 3 MAID IN MANHATTAN
- 4 SHANGHAI KNIGTS
- 5 WHITE OLEANDER
- 6 PELIKULA AT LIPUNAN
- 7 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 8 THE EYE
- 9 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
- 10 HERO
- 11 MAGNIFICO
- 12 BETTER THAN SEX

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

- 1 THE EYE
- 2 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 3 MAGNIFICO
- 4 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
- 5 THEY
- 6 MAID IN MANHATTAN
- 7 HERO
- 8 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

SM SOUTHMALL
8066888

- 1 MAID IN MANHATTAN
- 2 HERO
- 3 THE EYE
- 4 THEY
- 5 I SPY
- 6 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 7 MAGNIFICO
- 8 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 9 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
- 10 SUKDULAN

SM CITY CEBU
2313878

- 1 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
- 2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
- 3 RING (JAPANESE)
- 4 HOT CHICK
- 5 FEMME FATALE
- 6 BALAT SIBUYAS
- 7 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
- 8 I SPY

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

- 1 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
- 2 CLOSED
- 3 I SPY
- 4 8 MILE
- 5 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
- 6 ONE HOUR PHOTO
- 7 CLOSED
- 8 TRY SEVENTEEN

SM CITY PAMPANGA
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- 1 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 2 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 3 I SPY
- 4 MAGNIFICO
- 5 THEY
- 6 AB NORMAL COLLEGE

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294075

- 1 HERO
- 2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 3 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
- 4 MAID IN MANHATTAN

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

- 1 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 2 MAID IN MANHATTAN
- 3 MAGNIFICO
- 4 AB NORMAL COLLEGE

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998

- 1 I SPY
- 2 ONE HOUR PHOTO
- 3 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
- 4 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
- 5 REPLI-KATE
- 6 THEY

SM BICUTAN
776-3055

- 1 MAGNIFICO
- 2 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
- 3 MAID IN MANHATTAN
- 4 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
859-2884

- 1 I SPY
- 2 MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING
- 3 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
- 4 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

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- 1 TWO WEEKS NOTICE 11:15 MF/11:45/2:00/4:15/6:30/8:45/10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:45 END
- 2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS 11:00 MF/11:20/1:40/4:00/6:20/8:40/10:35 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:55 END

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- 2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
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- 5 AB NORMAL
- 6 HERO
- 7 THE CRIME OF PADRE AMARO
- 8 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 9 THE EYE
- 10 MAGNIFICO

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Ermita
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- 2 THEY
- 3 HERO
- 4 THE EYE
- 5 AB NORMAL
- 6 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 7 MAID IN MANHATTAN

Metro East - Marcos hway
682- 8193 / 8280

- 1 THEY
- 2 MAID IN MANHATTAN
- 3 MAGNIFICO
- 4 I SPY
- 5 HERO
- 6 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 7 AB NORMAL
- 8 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

Novaliches
935- 3229 - 30

- 1 HERO
- 2 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 3 THEY
- 4 MAGNIFICO
- 5 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 6 AB NORMAL
- 7 I SPY
- 8 MAID IN MANHATTAN

Malabon Citisquare
288-0985 / 288-2575

- 1 BALATSIBUYAS
- 2 MAGNIFICO
- 3 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 4 AB NORMAL

Star Mills- Sn. Fernando, Pamp.
875- 1927
961- 5318 / 5270

- 1 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 3 THEY
- 4 AB NORMAL
- 5 MAGNIFICO
- 6 WHITE OLEANDER

Imus
471- 8188 / 875- 3838

- 1 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 2 HERO
- 3 AB NORMAL
- 4 MAID IN MANHATTAN
- 5 THEY
- 6 MAGNIFICO

Sta. Rosa Laguna
049-8370907

- 1 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
- 2 MAGNIFICO
- 3 MAID IN MANHATTAN
- 4 THEY
- 5 AB NORMAL

Bacolod
441- 0453 / 0459

- 1 I SPY
- 2 HOT CHICK
- 3 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
- 4 THEY
- 5 LORD OF THE RINGS
- 6 SUKDULAN

Iloilo
336- 8077 - 78

- 1 I SPY
- 2 AB NORMAL
- 3 8 MILE
- 4 TRY SEVENTEEN
- 5 ONE HOUR PHOTO
- 6 LORD OF THE RINGS 2

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Jim Caviezel is next 'Jesus' onscreen, with Mel Gibson directing

From page A30

mination when she sets her sight on something. She puts her heart and soul into it, determined at all cost to get what she wants and achieve her goals.

After conquering the entertainment world first on TV (as a soap series princess on "Esperanza" and "Mula sa Puso") and later in the movies (in a string of box-office hits), Judy Ann now focuses on conquering the business world, as well.

She recently opened her own bar and restaurant, Kaffe Carabana in Timog Avenue, Quezon City, after giving up management on Café Kilimanjaro, which she used to own with other partners.

Now, Judy Ann works hands-on in managing her business. From buying the lot and choosing the interior design for the place to the accounting, inventory and even new recipes, Judy Ann is willing to learn everything.

"Owning a restaurant is a dream-come-true for me," Judy Ann says. "It's also one way of securing my future and that of my family, since show biz is not always a very stable business."

She laments that starting in show biz at a young age prevented her from continuing her studies and getting a college degree. Yet, Judy Ann doesn't regret the choices she made and remains optimistic.

"It's never too late to learn," quips the 24-year-old actress. "Education is very important. No one is too young or too old to learn."

So when the offer came for her to endorse Ama Computer Learning Center (ACLC), Judy Ann welcomed it. She knows she will not only get to endorse the leading computer learning school in the country, she will also get the chance to learn about business management and computers.

She admits she has very little knowledge of computers, which she acknowledges as an indispensable business tool. That's why she was excited to start the diploma course in computer-based accountancy using the Mind Your Own Business (MY-OB) program. It will allow her to learn computerized inventory, accounting and effective management.

Judy Ann's entry into ACLC was marked by a teleseries, "Ikaw sa Aking Pangarap," which was aired on all local TV channels.

The people behind ACLC, led by Amable C. Aguiluz IX, believe the teleseries will have a real impact on the lives and future of young people, like Judy Ann.

"Ikaw sa Aking Pangarap" is Judy Ann's TV commercial for Ama Computer Learning Center (ACLC).

Questions on film …

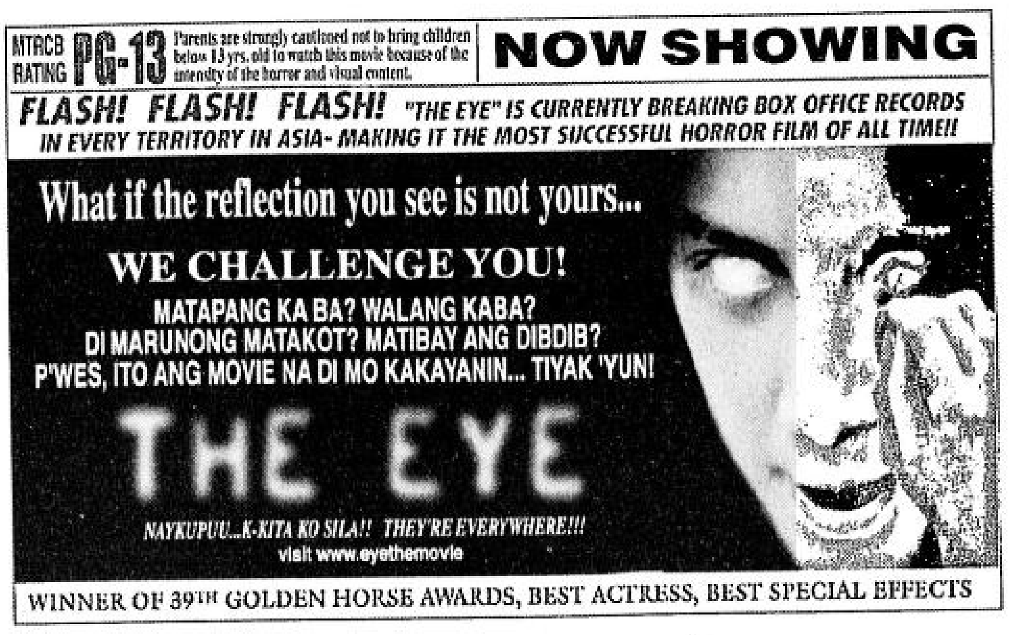
From page A29

by...," and the name attached to the tagline is almost always that of the film's director.

Of course, screenwriters don't agree with this total focus on the director. They acknowledge the director being the controlling artist, but would also like their work to be credited, perhaps with one-third of a given movies work.

To which, some directors retort: "But film is a visual medium, and your script doesn't 'write' those visuals, which only the director can provide. So, the screenplay is just an outline or springboard for the director's visual storytelling, which is what a film, if it's true to its essence, should mostly be about."

—Like we said, a controversial issue!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Stolen Summer by writer/director Pete Jones is the winner of the amateur filmmaking competition Project Greenlight. Kevin Pollak, Aidan Quinn, Brian Dennehy & child actor Max Weinberg stars in the story about a Catholic boy & a Jewish boy. When the Jewish boy finds out he's dying, he works with his friends to figure out how he can make sure he gets into heaven.
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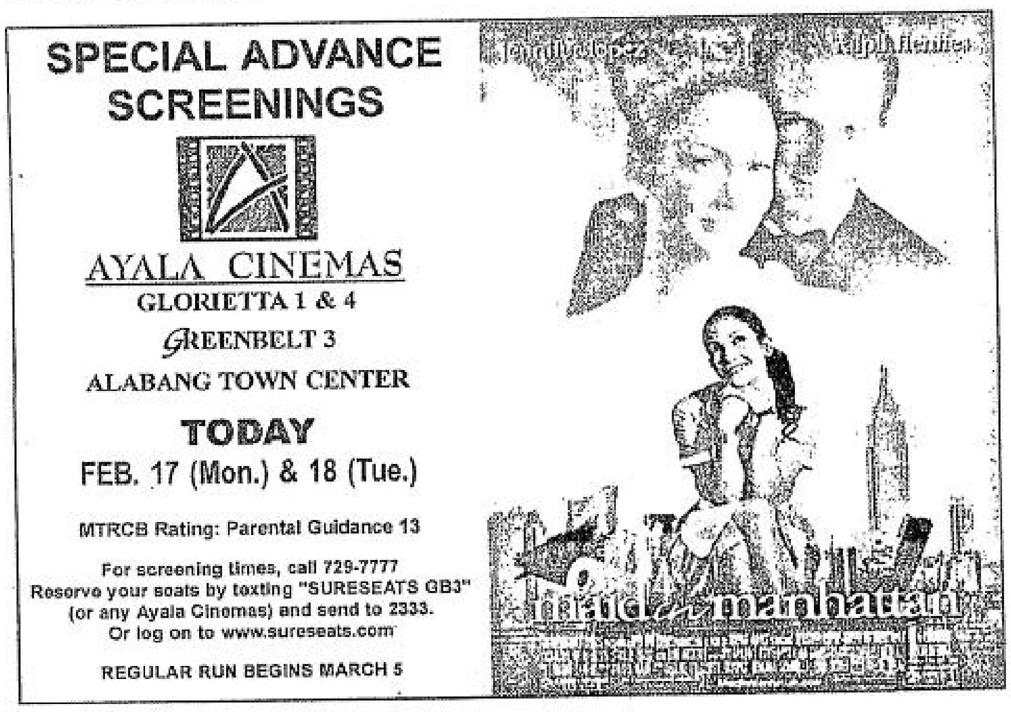
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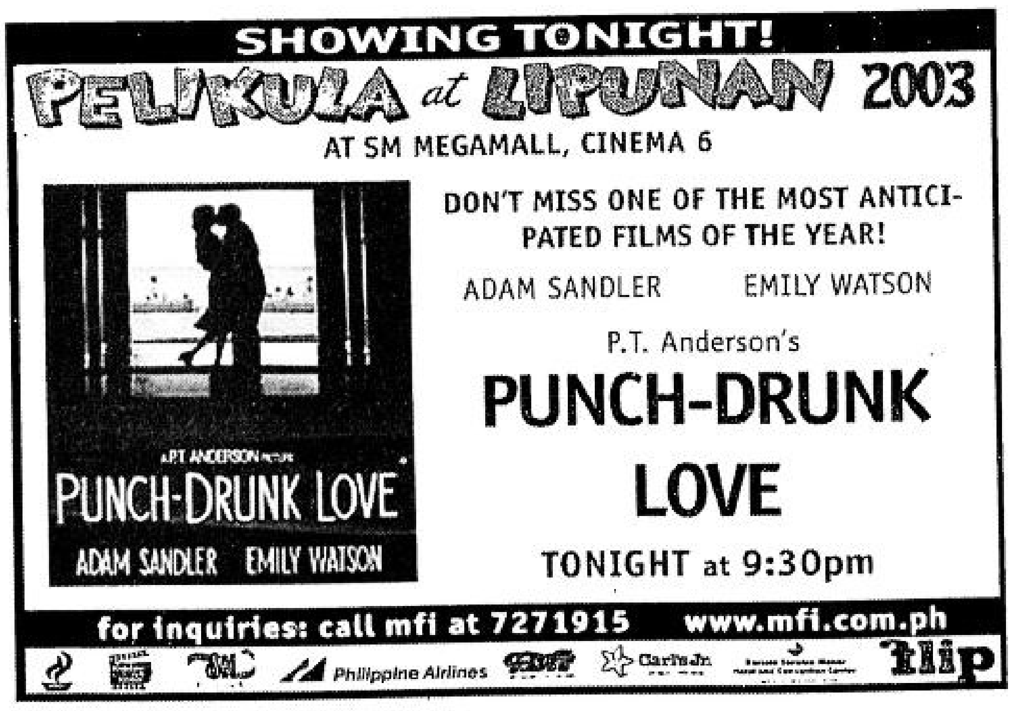
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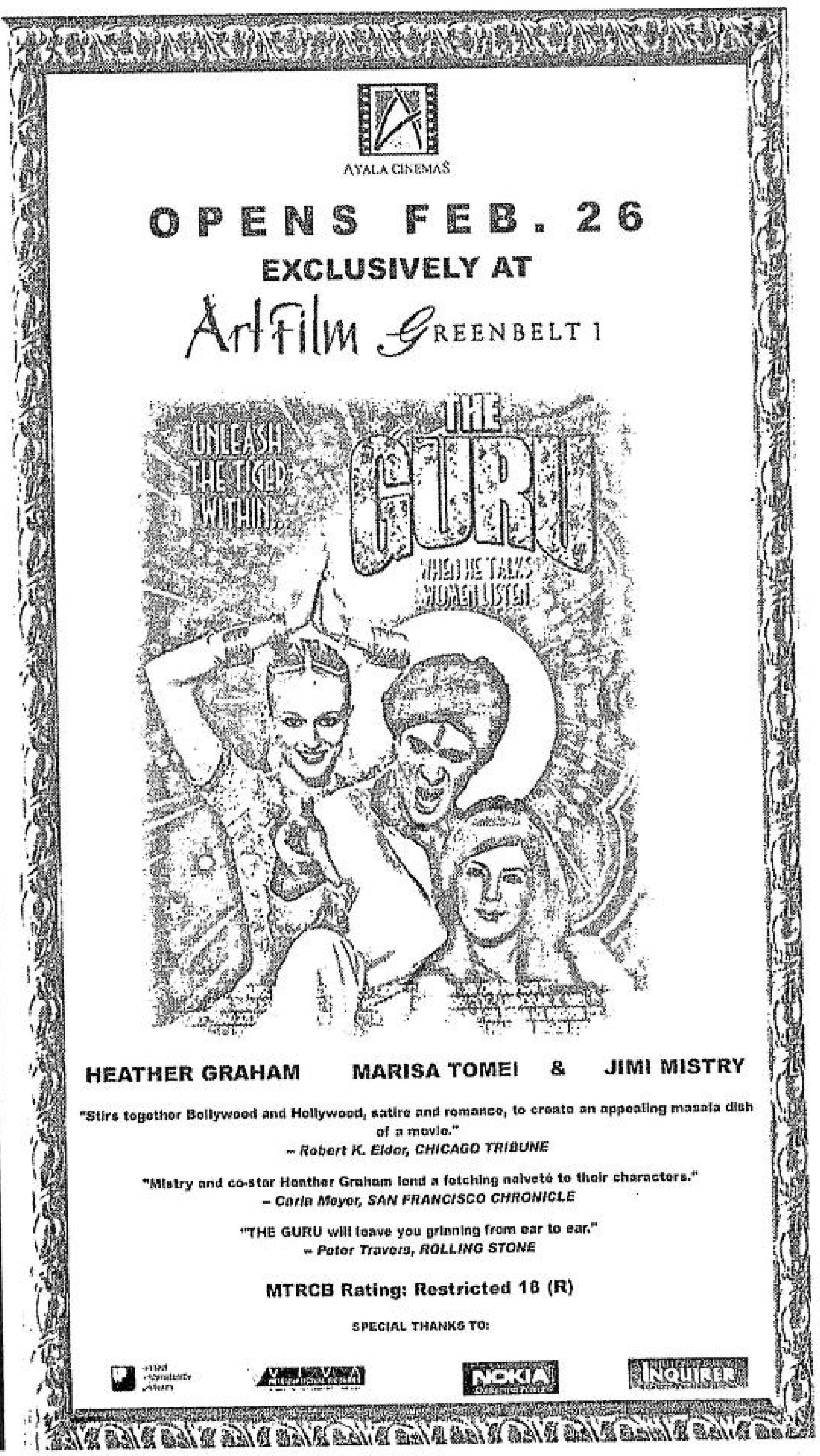
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– Carla Meyer, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE
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– Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE
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Questions on film appreciation answered

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

OUR RECENT notes on film appreciation have gotten feedback from readers interested in the movies. There really are a lot of film buffs out there! Our producers should be aware of this, and realize that they must come up with better movies to gain the patronage of the increasingly more discriminating and demanding film audience.

In addition to letters and phone calls, we have gotten invitations to speak on film matters, conduct film appreciation seminars, teach workshops in the various film crafts, and help put up film clubs.

We say yes to all such invitations because it's important that film viewers become more knowledgeable, to encourage or even pressure filmmakers to keep coming up with better movies. And we also ask our other film colleagues to join us in imparting the needed information to clubs, organizations and communities in different parts of the country. All you have to do is ask.

And now, some questions from readers: "How can I learn to tell a good film from a bad film?" That's one of the most basic questions, of course, but dependable rules of thumb would include: What is the movie attempting to do or say, how well does it succeed in doing it, and what is its value to the audience?

Value includes not just artistic, emotional or thematic worth, but also entertainment value. In other words, quality is not restricted to dramas or historical movies, even comedies, if well-made and really funny, deserve praise. It's also helpful to see how the movie uses the unique strengths of the film medium to achieve its objectives. The more visual the movie is, the more dynamically film-specific its expression and communication will be.

In addition, look for strong, clear and interesting storytelling, fascinating and empathetic characterizations, and significant plot and character development.

Finally, some filmmakers have acquired a good track record for making outstanding films, so some knowledge about certain film people's previous works could be a good guide. However, in the final analysis, each new movie should be taken on its own merits.

"What is the best relationship between a film director and the scriptwriter?" This topic is both interesting and controversial, because you will get different answers depending on whom you ask. Some movie scriptwriters believe that their input accounts for from one-third to one-half of a film's total creative worth, but a number of directors strongly disagree.

They subscribe to the auteur theory, which identifies the director not just as the major artist involved in the making of a film, but also as its sole "author". This is because all of the other film crafts, screenplay-writing included, are placed at the service of the director's organizing and controlling vision. That's why some movies bear the signature tagline, "A film

QUESTIONS/ A28

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TA
KO
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directed by: AL TANTAY
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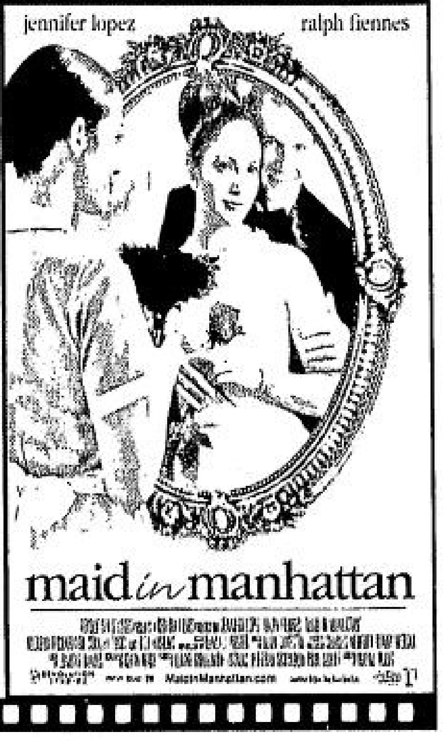

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ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	AB NORMAL
Ali 2	MAGNIFICO
Ali 3	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
Ali 4	THEY
Ali 5	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
Ali 6	WHITE OLEANDER
Ali 7	HERO
FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS	
Farmers 1	SUKDULAN
Farmers 2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
ARANETA COLISEUM	
FEB 17 & 19	NCA 7 COCK DERBY
FEB 21 & 22	MARTIN & POPS CONCERT
FEB 23	PBA OPENING GAMES
ELEPHANT WORLD	
FEB 18	10 AM
FEB 19	3 PM
FEB 20	10 AM

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	BLOOD RELATION / PICK-UP GIRLS
ODEON	SHANGHAI NIGHTS
ODEON-2	SEX EDUCATION / RATRATAN
ROBEN	BETTER THAN SEX
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	TUXEDO / CLOCK STOPPER
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	MAGNIFICO
CORONET B	CHANGING LANES / THE WILD SIDE
QUEZON-1	BETTER THAN SEX
REMAR	SHANGHAI NIGHTS
REMAR-2	BALAT SIBUYAS
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	AB NORMAL
B	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
CINEMA-2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BALAT SIBUYAS
CINEMA-2	SUKDULAN
CINEMA-3	I SPY
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
CINEMA-6	EYES
CINEMA-7	FEMME FATALE
CINEMA-8	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	THEY
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	HERO
CINEMA-12	WHITE OLEANDER
CINEMA-14	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
CINEMA-15	MAGNIFICO
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING LANES
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

'TWO WEEKS NOTICE'

Solid diversion in a season of falling in love all over again

By Ruben M. Cruz Jr.
Contributor

REVIEW

I'VE said this over and over again: I'm a sucker for romantic comedies. Sure the stories are almost always the same, but who cares? Storylines in romantic comedies aren't supposed to mean much anyway. They're only a means to an end: for two people whom you'd like to see fall in love, fall in love.

You don't go see a romantic comedy because it's a searing portrait of the way we live. You see it to escape from the stodginess of everyday life. You see it because it's a fairy tale and you're a die-hard romantic.

The genre is certainly not one for hard-hearted realists. So what if it's formula? Conventional storytelling isn't necessarily a bad thing, especially when it is accomplished with zest and verve.

That's precisely what "Two Weeks Notice" does. As romantic comedies go, the film fits the standard definition of the genre. It has the tried-but-true story of boy gets girl, boy loses girl, boy tries to get girl back (by the way, in our age of political correctness, the boy's and girl's roles are interchangeable; see "Someone Like You."). It hunkers down in the valley of feel-good entertainment and never strays away.

Formula

Still, "Two Weeks Notice" has too much romantic appeal and on-screen chemistry to be dismissed as just another film in the ever-growing pool of romantic comedies. Its formula actually serves as a paper skeleton for some very good acting, dialogue, comedy and direction.

Normally, when it comes to films like these, chemistry counts far more than a solid script or crackling direction. But "Two Weeks Notice" is strong on all three departments.

Hugh Grant and Sandra Bullock are two actors who drip effortless charm. In this film they're simply adorable.

Bullock plays Lucy Kelson, a Harvard-trained lawyer who wages a quixotic fight trying to preserve historical and cultural landmarks against modern-day mega developers like Hugh's George Wade.

One day George's older brother (played by David Haig), who actually runs the real estate company George heads, tells him it's time he hires a competent chief legal counsel.

The bimbos with obscure law degrees he plays with just wouldn't do anymore, his brother says.

Distraction

George meets Lucy and thinks why not her? She's dedicated, graduated from Harvard and is too plain looking to be a distraction. Moreover, he gets to eliminate a pesky anti-progress activist who pickets most of their construction projects. In exchange for her service, George offers to lay off the community center Lucy's trying to save and give her control of their company's *pro bono* work and other charities which are worth millions.

It's a good quid pro quo, but George slowly drives Lucy crazy until she finally decides to quit and hand in her (and hence the title) two weeks notice.

There's not a person in the audience who can't guess exactly how the film will turn out but that's okay. Like I said "Two Weeks Notice" goes through the paces with such zest and verve that it's hard not to enjoy it.

Love is a difficult emotion to capture on film and too often, screen romances look like two actors just going through the motions. But with Grant and Bullock, you see something genuine. The actors really seem to embody the fates of their characters. And their love is far less contrived than other standard Hollywood productions.

Attraction

Even if the outcome between George and Lucy is certain, there's no headlong rush to love, nor is there a powerful attraction at first sight. It makes the relationship dynamic more believable when love is brewed as it is here, and it creates real stakes: we care and find ourselves caring throughout the film, whether George and Lucy will indeed be happy together.

The film is as intelligently directed and written as it is played. Writer and director Marc Lawrence (who also wrote the script for "Miss Congeniality") creates scenes in a way that develops the comedy without sacrificing the notion that two similar people might very likely find themselves in the same situations.

Grant gets to deliver the wittiest lines in reprising a role not quite unlike the rich and emotionally insulated Will Freeman, the character he played in "About A Boy."

ON-SCREEN CHEMISTRY. Hugh Grant and Sandra Bullock drip adorable charm and are simply adorable.

In "Two Weeks Notice," Grant as George thinks his life is a lot like monopoly and frequently pokes fun at Lucy's altruistic values.

Obstacle

"You make Gandhi look like a used-car salesman," he tells her.

One time, Lucy introduces George to her parents (Robert Klein and Dana Ivey), both lefty liberal lawyers like Lucy. She apologizes for her mom's intimidating ways and he replies, "I thought she was going to kill me and feed me to the poor."

Even the film's obligatory obstacle, the girl who squeezes herself between George and Lucy, is not a hapless instrument of the plot. It's easy to be taken by June (Alicia Witt), Lucy's brainy and beautiful replacement. I can understand how she can bring out the rascal in George.

Witt can bring out the rascal in any man. She exudes the same luminous presence and star quality of the film's leads.

"Two Weeks Notice" may not have the emotional power of "Catch Me If You Can" or the euphoric quality of "8 Mile," but it offers one and a half hours of solid diversion. And because it is the season of falling in love all over again, there will surely be no shortage of date-night moviegoers eager to see it.

What's the real score between Janice and Luke?

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

ARE **Janice de Belen** and former South Border lead singer **Luke Mejares** now playing beautiful music together?

What's the real score between them? Barhoppers insist that Janice is a permanent fixture in all of Luke's shows. I see nothing wrong with that, though. The last time Janice and I had a chance to talk, she was very vocal about her admiration for Luke's former band South Border.

"*Baby ako ng banda*. They sing all my requests when I watch them perform," Janice says.

In turn, I told her I hardly miss any gig of my favorite band True Faith. But that doesn't mean that I'm romantically entangled with any of the band members.

That's why I find it quite odd if some people insinuate that Janice is stalking Luke.

As far as Luke is concerned, he is said to be flattered that Janice watches his shows regularly because he's a big fan of hers since her "Flor de Luna" days.

If at all, anything serious develops between them is nothing really bad.

Janice's ex-husband **John Estrada** has found happiness anew in the arms of **Vanessa del Bianco**. So Janice is also entitled to another try.

Just asking

COULD it be true that **Giselle Sanchez** and her hubby **Emil** are having marital problems because until now they still don't have a baby?

I wonder if that's by choice or by circumstance?

When I bumped into Giselle recently, she was her usual bubbly self. There was nary a trace that she's undergoing some sort of pressure, although most comediennes like her are really good at keeping up a brave front.

It's not easy trying to make the audience laugh when you're dealing with some personal stuff. The show must go on, they say. Hopefully, so will Giselle's marriage.

Awesome concerts

I IMMENSELY enjoyed watching Stephen Speaks at the NBC Tent and Boyz II Men at the Fort Open Field. Thanks to Warner Music Philippines and to **Lizza Nakpil** (of Jag Jeans) for the much-coveted tickets.

Considering that it was a school night (Wednesday), students came in droves to catch the show of the phenomenal band Stephen Speaks. Their first album hit the platinum mark weeks after its release which contains the smash hits "Passenger Seat" and "Out of My League."

The band was obviously in awe of their immense following here in Manila, just as much as the audience were in a daze watching them perform live. They sang all their songs *appassionato* and even gave an encore and gamely signed autographs after the show.

The members had no superstar complex. By all indications, this cool band will never let fame get into their heads.

As for the Boyz II Men Valentine show, it was an awesome evening. Even if my honey **Allan** and I had to endure standing up during the entire show, it was well worth it. The ushers could not seem to control the crowd that's why most ticket-holders (even in the VIP section) ended up not finding their seats.

The soulful performance of the band more than compensated for the mayhem. Although one member wasn't around, their vocal power was undiminished.

For a foreign act, it was quite surprising that their show started on time. They sang hit after hit, plus new cuts from their latest album and even showered their adoring lady fans with red roses. Everybody was dying to catch a rose that it seemed like they were throwing a bridal bouquet.

Too bad they didn't sing "One Sweet Day," though. Perhaps they will do it when they come back, as they promised to.

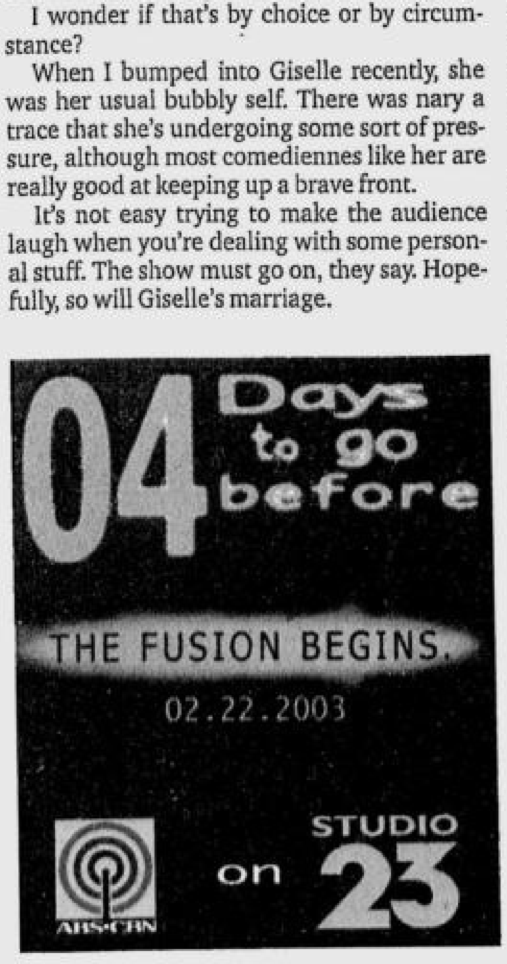
The band was visibly moved by the warm reception, Pinoy style. They profusely thanked the audience with matching flying kisses, beating their chests with gusto as if to show how heart-tugging the "welcome" they got was.

"The love we feel tonight is more than the love we ever received in all our shows last year. We feel you Manila," the members said.

In Boyz II Men lingo, I can truly say "It was whatssup, dudes!"

In their native Philadelphia, that means everything jells and all is well and swell.

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com or jaimealsan@yahoo.com



Jim Caviezel is next 'Jesus' onscreen, with Mel Gibson directing

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

ANYTHING and everything about **Mel Gibson** interests me and hooks me with wide-eye excitement. So when an officemate handed me the latest issue of Time Magazine (Feb. 17, 2003), which carried an article about the filming of "The Passion," I immediately read it.

"The Passion" is about the life and death of **Jesus Christ**, with **Jim Caviezel** in the lead. But what is truly interesting about the movie is the guy working behind the cameras. He is drop-dead-gorgeous actor Mel Gibson, who is making his third directorial opus following his Oscar winning turn as a megman in 1995's medieval epic, "Braveheart."

Time Magazine had an exclusive peek into the filming of "The Passion" at Rome's Cinecitta studio, where a huge sound stage recreated the Biblical places.

Gibson, whose last starring role was in the huge box office earner, "Signs," is not only directing "The Passion." His production outfit is also bankrolling the project, with a cost of $25 million.

From day one of the filming, Gibson has been bold about his take on the Bible, despite more than a hundred films produced on the life of Jesus. Why, Jesus even gets to sing in musicals like "Godspell" and "Jesus Christ Superstar."

But Gibson is simply undaunted to pursue his latest big screen project, which apparently sees his utmost passion for filmmaking. He said a film on the life of Jesus Christ had been on his mind for 10 years and now that it's finally on solid production stage, Gibson cannot be any pleased.

He doesn't think he's insane even if he's using two "dead" languages in the film. Caviezel, as Jesus Christ, will get to speak in Latin and Aramaic, minus the subtitles.

Gibson said the audience simply has to focus on the visuals.

Caviezel, who starred in such films as "High Crimes," "Frequency" and "The Count of Monte Cristo," told Time Magazine he is getting help from The One Up There to play Jesus Christ on the big screen.

The Calvary scene alone took him 15 days to shoot and was indeed an "immense amount of (physical) suffering" for him on the set. Caviezel had to wear shackles, get beaten and whipped. In a scene where he was trounced, he separated his left shoulder.

The "unofficial" website of "The Passion" reported that before filming in Rome's production studios, Gibson took cast and crew on location to Matera and Craco in Southern Italy, where they started working in November last year. That particular season allowed him to capture the soft tones on the color of light in that part of Italy. The landscape in ancient Matera looks very similar to Jerusalem, hence the choice.

Faithful to the production calendar, the cast and crew carried on with filming in Rome after two months. The film is slated for an Easter 2004 playdate.

Gibson, who turned down director **Martin Scorsese**'s offer to play Jesus Christ, has reportedly adopted a "Scorsesean" style in filming "The Passion." Like the Oscar-nominated director for "Gangs of New York," Gibson said he is giving meticulous attention to violence.

Scorsese also worked at the helm of the controversial "The Last Temptation of Christ."

Yet, even if Gibson is directing a religious picture, the actor-director, according to the Time article, hardly sets a pious tone on the set. In between takes, he acts as the jester of the entire production and cracks practical jokes on the crew to loosen up the exhausting and laborious work.

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR. Jim Caviezel will not sing, though, but will get to speak in Aramaic and Latin in "The Passion."

Gibson first hit it big as an actor in Australia, where he made a string of hits, including "Tim" and "Gallipoli," which won him Australian best actor award.

His Road Warrior roles in the "Mad Max" series gained him a cult following in America.

With **Peter Weir**'s "The Year of Living Dangerously," which was filmed in Olongapo, Gibson clinched international stardom.

The New York native who moved to Australia when he was 12, made his directorial debut in 1993's "Man Without a Face," which he also topbilled.

"The Passion" is his first job as a director which does not see him also as a star.

Gibson belongs to the A-list of Hollywood actors who get $20 million per film. To date, his other box office hits include the "Lethal Weapon" series, "Forever Young," "Ransom," "Maverick," "Conspiracy Theory," "The Patriot" and "What Women Want."

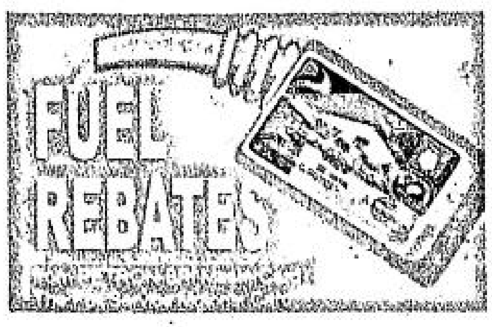
He even did voice-overs for animated films like "Pocahontas" (as the leading man John Smith) and "Chicken Run."

From acting to business

EVEN if her melodramatic life is often sugarcoated by the glitz and glamor of show biz, young actress **Judy Ann Santos** shows her deter-

JESUS/ A28

RISING ENTREPRENEUR. Judy Ann Santos works hands-on in her business.



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Peso hits 18-month low; T-bill bids junked

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE PESO sank to an 18-month low of 54.199 to $1 yesterday after opening weak from last Friday's close of 53.935.

Traders said the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas sold about $10 million in the foreign exchange market, where total turnover reached $52 million, to stabilize the peso.

"There is some nervousness in the market in relation to the FATF sanctions. We're still hoping that we can avoid it. Whenever there is uncertainty, the exchange rate is always affected particularly when it concerns remittances," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said yesterday.

A dollar supply crunch is also being caused by higher demand among importers trying to build up their inventory and investors beefing up their foreign exchange holdings in anticipation of a weaker peso.

The lowest exchange rate seen prior to yesterday's closing level was 54.335 to $1 seen on July 18, 2001.

The weakening peso prompted banks to seek a higher return for their funds placed in government securities.

But the government rejected yesterday all bids for its bimonthly treasury bill auction after banks sought yields that were simply too high.

Had it accepted the bids, the benchmark 91-day rate would have gone up by 96.5 basis points to 6.637 percent, the 182-day by 111.2 basis points to 7.712 percent and the 364-day by 85 basis points to 8.459 percent.

Deputy Treasurer Eduardo Mendiola said they would continue rejecting unreasonable bids as the government still had a healthy cash position.

"Why should we pay a premium for our borrowing when we are the only borrower in town and the most secured at that among so many lenders. The banks should reconsider their position," Mendiola said.

Total bids reached P13.82 billion, divided into P7.302 billion for the three-month bills, P3.695 billion for the six-month papers, and P2.825 billion for the one-year bills against the P4 billion, P3 billion and P2.5 billion offered by the government.

The deputy treasurer said banks must even give the government a discount and treat it at par with other borrowers like blue chip companies.

"There is such a thing as prime lending rate that they give to companies like San Miguel Corp. Why can't they give us the same rate? A 100-basis-point uptick in one auction is not rational," insisted Mendiola said.

Traders, however, insisted that treasury yields in the secondary market had gone up to 7.5 percent for the 91-day, 8.2 percent for the 182-day and 8.9 percent for the 364-day.

Mendiola said the government would settle P4 billion worth of maturing bills and bonds tomorrow and this would give the market additional liquidity, wondering where banks would put the money if the government would continue to reject their bids.

"We already allowed the rates to move up two weeks ago. The business of borrowing and lending is driven by supply and demand and when demand comes only from the government, why should they charge us higher," the deputy treasurer said.

PESO/B2

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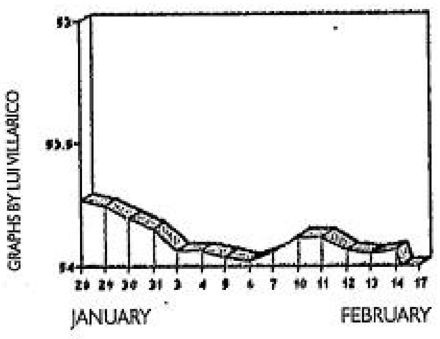

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P 54.199 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 17, 2003

Y 120.42 = $1

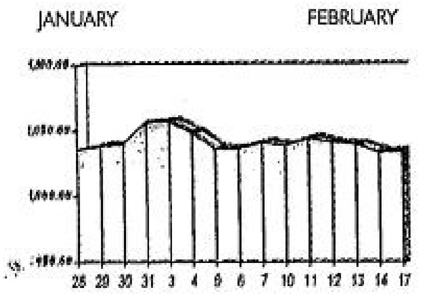
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 17, 2003

GOLD: $345.50-346.00

per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 17, 2003

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



Stocks end 3-day losing streak

STOCKS ended slightly higher yesterday, tracking Wall Street's rally, but analysts did not expect a sustained rise due to economic risks after a global watchdog rejected the country's new money-laundering law.

The main index snapped three days of losses by gaining a slim 1.03 points or 0.1 percent to 1,034.76 after the Dow Jones industrial average leapt 2.05 percent on Friday.

Cross transactions in property firm Acesite Hotel and local fast-food giant Jollibee Foods Corp. boosted total turnover to P235.86 million from Friday's P157.34 million.

In the broader market, gainers outpaced losers 18 to 16 and 33 stocks were unchanged.

"The US equities market had a technical rally and it somehow inspired a technical bounce in the local market," said AB Capital stock analyst Jose Vistan.

"But there are immediate risks following the Paris body's thumbing down of the anti-money laundering bill." The Financial Action Task Force (FATF), sponsored by the Group of Seven industrialized nations, on Friday recommended its members implement sanctions against the Philippines by March 15 unless it comes up with a stronger dirty-money law.

Analysts said the Philippines cannot afford to be hit by sanctions since they would put nearly every international banking transaction under scrutiny.

"This will have a widespread effect on financial markets due to risks on trade and dollar inflows," Vistan said.

"We see the market testing the immediate support of 1,030 given the uncertainties. The next support is at 1,010, with upside at 1,050." PLDT fell P2.50 to P297.50 after it was reported that Britain's Cable & Wireless Plc had complained to the National Telecommunications Commission that PLDT cut its connections to the country.

Reuters

Dec. bank loans up 2.4%

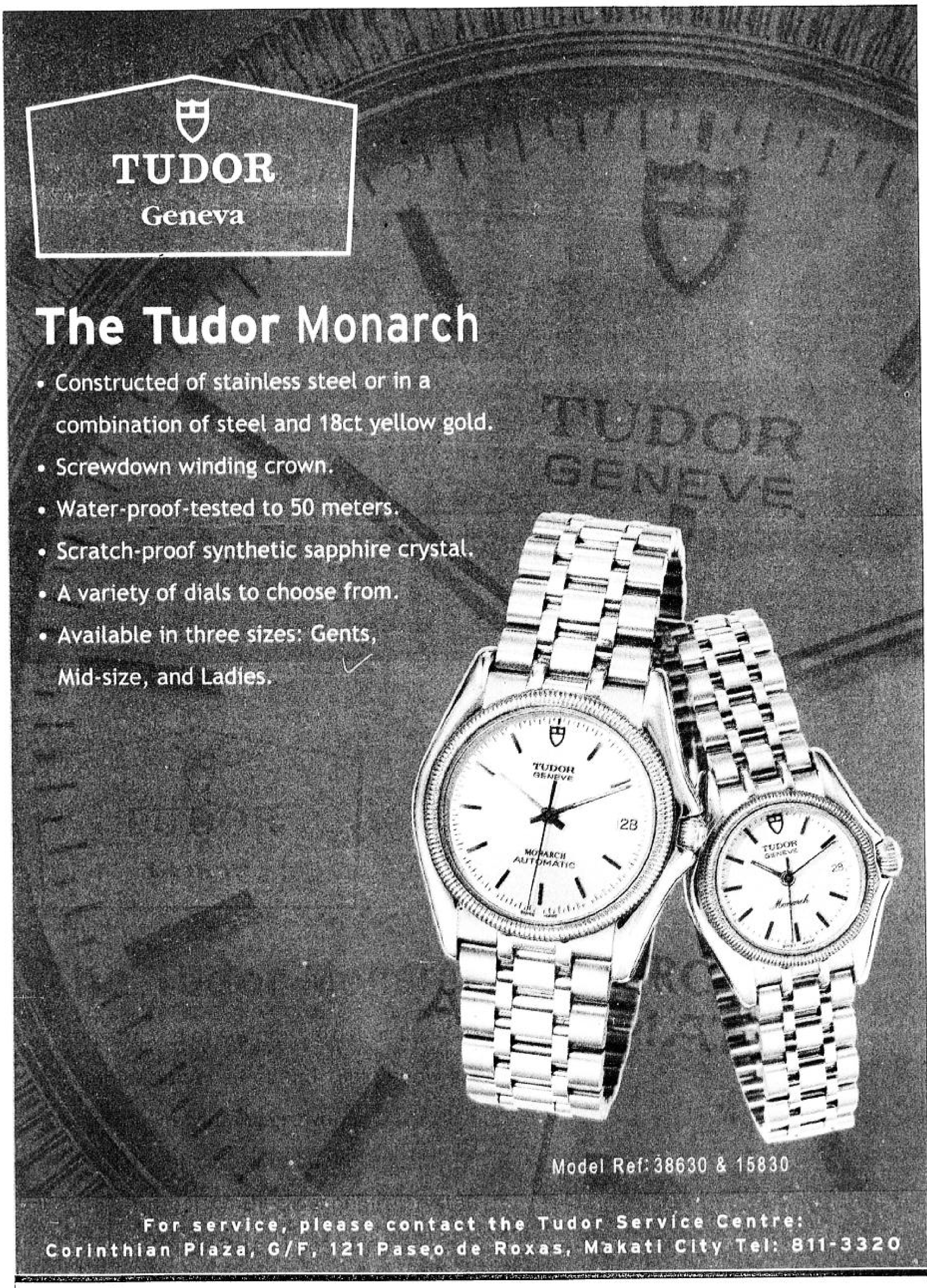
COMMERCIAL bank loans grew 2.4 percent in December from a year earlier, to P1.43 trillion, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said.

December showed the biggest annual loan growth in 2002, the central bank said in a report. It was the fourth consecutive monthly increase.

"The notable upturn in bank credits to the manufacturing sector contributed to the recovery in bank lending," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said.

Buenaventura said strong lending to the farm sector, social and personal services and real estate also boosted lending.

Reuters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-Level 2, Mega A, SM Megamall

LUCERNE JEWELLERS
-G/F, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center
-Level 2, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
-Level 2, Mega B, SM Megamall
-Level 2, Expansion Mall,
Alabang Town Center
-G/F, Ayala Center, Cebu

MULTI-TIME EMPORIUM
-G/F, SM City, North Edsa, Q.C.

RUSTAN'S SILVER VAULT
-Rustan's Makati, Ayala Center

TIME TREND CENTER
-Upper G/F, Mega B,
SM Megamall
-Ground Level, SM City, Manila

WASHINGTON JEWELRY EMPORIUM
-Level 3, Mega B, SM Megamall
-Lower G/F, SM City, Manila
-G/F, SM City, North Edsa, Q.C.
-North Mall, Alabang Town Center
-G/F, Ali Mall
-G/F, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center
-G/F, Harrison Plaza

WASHINGTON WATCHES & JEWELRIES
-G/F, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
-Level R1, Power Plant Mall
Rockwell Center

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Hi to high contract

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

HANJIN is one of the biggest groups in its home base, South Korea, and so even in this country, the conglomerate is what you may call "influential." More so here!

Now the giant is gaining a little reputation in local construction circles. Word goes around that Hanjin has yet to pay its subcontractors.

A number of them did work at the international airport terminal in Davao City. Hanjin holds a big, fat contract with the DOTC for the six-building terminal.

Recently, some congressmen had a face-to-face, eyeball-to-eyeball contact with Hanjin executives in another agonizing episode of the soap called congressional hearing.

* * *

ANYWAY, the House transportation committee, chaired by Rep. Jacinto "Uh-oh" Paras, and so you better watch out, held a hearing on the long-delayed Davao airport.

They found out something nice about this influential South Korean giant. It turned out that Hanjin merely farmed out 90 percent of the job to some local boys.

It looked like Hanjin landed the contract only on a "commission basis." In other words, it is making a lot of money by NOT doing the work itself.

Thus, as a mere go-between, Hanjin should only enjoy the right to deny payment to the local subcontracting boys, who did all the work and put up all the capital. Nice!

* * *

STILL, Hanjin may not be the type to dupe the local boys. After all, the Davao City airport contract costs only P1.7 billion. This is mere kimchi to a company like Hanjin.

In fact, Hanjin is one of the few foreign companies operating here which can boast a remarkable pedigree back home.

Hanjin belongs to the same famous family in South Korea who also owns the giant Hanjin Shipping, not to mention that country's flag-carrier Korean Airlines.

With such a rich and famous lineage, Hanjin may also want to protect its reputation, if not that of its country, when it does business even in a poor country like ours.

* * *

BUT the thing is, Hanjin got the contract for those airport buildings, although it had no track record, at least none in the local construction scene, for doing vertical projects.

Hanjin did a lot of roads here, sure, plus of course the structure of that wasting-away, on-the-verge LRT II, which is also taking forever to finish.

And so how did Hanjin get the contract for the airport buildings? It seemed, based on the congressional hearing, it also did the Davao City airport runway.

From there, some bright guys at the DOTC simply pre-qualified Hanjin for the building project, without so much as looking into Hanjin's actual experience.

It's like all the Hanjin guys said was "hi," and immediately, the DOTC guys said, "you're qualified." And so the high-rise contract looked like...well, *"dagdag."*

* * *

IN its home country, nevertheless, based on its qualification submitted to the DOTC at that time, Hanjin also did a big airport project—also a horizontal project.

For the Davao City terminal contract, therefore, its first vertical project, Hanjin relied heavily on its local subcontractors.

As the congressmen found out themselves, Hanjin did have Korean nationals to supervise the terminal project, but it did not have its own structural engineers.

It turned out that the structural design was faulty. Some 200 beams of the buildings cracked worse than the voice of those adolescent boys in the ABS-CBN soaps.

* * *

WORST, as the House transportation committee discovered, Hanjin did not even know that something was wrong with the structural design.

At first, of course, for whatever face-saving reasons, Hanjin executives claimed in the hearing that, actually, they found out about the design failure.

But a member of the committee, who happened to come from Davao City, showed them some documents which said they knew nothing about the whole thing.

It was only then that the Hanjin executives admitted, well, its subcontractors discovered the mistake, and the DOTC did nothing about it until it was too late.

* * *

DOING project management for DOTC is this DAC, the Davao Airport Consortium, which has a prestigious lineup of construction groups.

It has the famous architect Lindy Locsin, the famous contractor Felipe F. Cruz Sr., and the famous American design company DMJM.

So prestigious is that lineup that, perhaps, the Association of Structural Engineers of the Philippines, or Asep, could not recommend that DAC redo the beams.

Asep merely recommended a repair job—for all 200 beams. The repair should cost P70 million. Nobody wanted to shoulder the bill. In short, more delay.

* * *

IF you listen to Finance Secretary Jose Isidro "the Whiz" Camacho, it looks like the car assemblers (i.e. heavy importers) are winning again. This was only to be expected.

The companies have been fighting with the Department of Finance over the tax system on vehicles. For so long now the Whiz has wanted to plug the so-called loopholes.

In taxation, as I was saying before I was erotically interrupted, este, before I was overtaken by GROs, este, whatever, loopholes are just legal ways of cheating.

But the car assemblers did not want the DOF to change anything. They would rather have Congress do the changes. As expected, the Whiz agreed.

* * *

IF we are going to wait for Congress to pass the law to remove the loopholes in the tax system on vehicles, you can bet your sweet little pet that it is not going to happen soon.

In agreeing to give way to Congress, the Whiz believed that we could have the new law by May this year. He must be optimistic by nature. Or maybe, well, just gullible!

At the rate this Congress works, boss, the amendment to the A-moll, or the anti-money-laundering law, took all of one and a half years. *Mali pa!*

Moreover, in the case of the A-moll, Congress was even under pressure. Believe me, Congress will take its sweet time on the vehicle taxation. In short, loopholes galore!

* * *

AS things stand, certain members of Congress are already mouthing the line of the Department of Trade and Industries, i.e. the side of the car assemblers.

They want the car assemblers to keep their tax holidays for certain types of vehicles, particularly the AUV, in which a lot of cheating is taking place.

For example, Honda Philippines simply added more seats to its SUV version of the CR-V, and—presto—it qualified for the tax incentives for—what else—AUVs.

Whadayano, it was on that same AUV that the Whiz and Honda had a little argument, which is the same thing Congress wants to protect. See what I mean!

Camacho to convince CalPERS to retain RP in investment list

By Clarissa S. Batino

FINANCE Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho yesterday said he would meet with the board members of the California Public Employees' Retirement System tomorrow to convince the biggest pension fund in the United States not to heed the advice of its consultant to drop the Philippines from its investment portfolio.

"Aside from their placement, CalPERS has a lot of weight on other investors and their decision sends a signal to others," the finance chief said.

Camacho said he would try to convince CalPERS that the rating that its consultant gave the Philippines might have been incorrect particularly in the areas of political stability, civil liberties, and transaction cost.

"From a range of 1 to 3 (3 being the highest score) Wilshire Consulting downgraded our rating in political stability to 1 from 2 when we could argue that, in fact, our political environment even improved after President Macapagal-Arroyo decided not to run for the 2004 elections," he explained.

Camacho was also disappointed that the Philippines only got a score of 2 on civil liberties when he believed the country was among the most democratic in the region.

A damage control team led by US Ambassador Alberto del Rosario and Philippine Stock Exchange president Ernest Leung already met with Wilshire Consulting and officials of CalPERS during the weekend.

While the fund had an exposure of about $30 million in the Philippine equities market (its total fund is estimated at $133 billion), the influence of CalPERS on other foreign funds is significant and any decision to cut its ties with the country could prompt the others to do the same.

The state-owned pension fund would decide on the 18th whether or not it would drop the Philippines again from its list. A year ago, CalPERS said it would no longer invest in equities in the Philippines as well as in three other Southeast Asian economies for failing to meet its new standards for emerging market investments.

By mid-year, CalPERS reversed its decision and said it would bring back some $25 million in portfolio investments to the Philippines. Market players, however, said the pension fund had not actually returned.

Wilshire Consulting said CalPERS should add Thailand and Malaysia to its list again but also exclude China, Pakistan, Indonesia, Venezuela, Russia and Egypt from possible investments.

The consultant recommended adding Jordan, India, Morocco, Sri Lanka and Colombia as target markets for the first time, based on a range of market- and country-specific considerations including trading liquidity and labor practices.

"Wilshire found there have been some distractions in the Philippines that have prevented them from putting in some important financial reforms to strengthen their financial markets," said a CalPERS official.

"If we talk about stability, the whole world is unstable," said Camacho, stressing that the Philippines should not be singled out by foreign fund managers.

Ionics subsidiary adopts new business strategy

IONICS EMS Inc., a unit of leading semiconductor manufacturer Ionics Inc., is set to migrate into the original design manufacturing business while bracing for the termination of a major electronics manufacturing services (EMS) contract with Philips Electronics N.V. by year's end.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, Ionics Inc. corporate secretary Manuel Roxas said Ionics EMS, which is listed on the Singapore Stock Exchange, would become an independent original design manufacturer (ODM) supplying drives to the PC original equipment manufacturing industry starting 2004.

"In the transition year 2003, Ionics will industrialize and ramp up a first generation of DVD-RW and the exclusive EMS relationship with Philips Optical Storage will be discontinued in December 2003," Roxas said.

"Ionics EMS already did successfully design and manufacture an external combo drive (CD-RW and DVD-Roms) for a large multinational customer and will further strengthen its design capability and relationship with key component suppliers," he said.

Analysts said Ionics EMS, which was relying heavily on the Philips contract for bulk of its revenues in the last few years, said the shift to the ODM business could bring about better growth. However, they warned that the local company would have to brace for cutthroat competition because buyers now prefer to go to suppliers located in mainland China.

"It will no longer have guaranteed income. It will have to work hard," an analyst said, noting that the shift in business along with the expiration of the Philips contract would be a "double-edged" sword for Ionics, which started commercial operations in July 1987 as a contract electronics manufacturer.

As an EMS contractor, the Ionics group produces electronic items with patents or designs owned by a foreign contractor such as IBM, Fujitsu, and NEC through subcontracting work. It manufactures and assembles components that are used as inputs for the finished products in the computer, automotive or communications industries either through a consignment (where it provides labor and manufacturing overhead while customer provides product designs and raw materials) or turnkey arrangement (it provides all inputs except for design).

While the ODM business has a higher value added and potential margins compared to EMS because of the design inputs, the analyst said it might take time for Ionics to be able maximize its existing capacity given the continued slump in the global electronics market.

GOLFERS CLUB SHARES, INC.
SEC LICENSE # A 1998-2129
AS OF FEB. 17, 2003

	SELLING	BUYING
1. ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	1,400,000	1,300,000
2. ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"	1,500,000	1,350,000
3. BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	630,000	600,000
4. CALATAGAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	80,000	60,000
5. CAMP JOHN HAY	280,000	220,000
6. CANLUBANG GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	450,000	
7. CAPITOL HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	120,000	100,000
8. CELEBRITY CLUB	180,000	170,000
9. COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	350,000	340,000
10. CLUB FILIPINO	190,000	140,000
11. EASTRIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	130,000	
12. EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	300,000	250,000
13. EVERCREST GOLF CLUB "A"	100,000	
14. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	200,000	
15. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	250,000	
16. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	350,000	
17. LUISITA GOLF CLUB	350,000	
18. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	250,000	230,000
19. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	270,000	250,000
20. MANILA GOLF CLUB (IND.)	11,020,000	10,800,000
21. MANILA GOLF CLUB (CORP.)	13,000,000	
22. MANILA POLO CLUB	2,600,000	2,400,000
23. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "A"	580,000	475,000
24. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "B"	600,000	550,000
25. METROPOLITAN CLUB "A"	100,000	
26. METROPOLITAN CLUB "B"	150,000	100,000
27. MT. MALARAYAT GOLF CLUB (IND.)	350,000	
28. ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A" "B" "C"	Pls. call	Pls. call
29. QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	210,000	200,000
30. RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	180,000	150,000
31. RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	210,000	
32. RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	300,000	
33. STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB "A"	1,500,000	1,300,000
34. SUBIC BAY YACHT CLUB (IND.)	170,000	
35. TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS INT'L GOLF CLUB	850,000	800,000
36. TAGAYTAY MIDLAND	750,000	700,000
37. VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB	150,000	140,000
38. VALLEY GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	280,000	250,000
39. WACK WACK GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	6,200,000	

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Monday, February 17, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.5	16.5	16.25	16.25	21,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	34	34	33.5	34	356,600
Citystate Savings Bank	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	24.75	24.75	24	24	69,900
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	29.5	29.5	29	29	8,500
Philippine National Bank	27	27	27	27	5,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	17.25	17.25	17	17	46,200
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	40,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1235	1235	1235	1235	1,820
Sun Life Financial Serv.	925	930	925	930	330
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	980,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	530	530	520	525	5,170
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	5,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	297.5	297.5	297.5	297.5	12,850
Philweb Corp.	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	4,400,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	24,000
Manila Electric Co. B	12.5	12.5	12.25	12.25	775,200
Petron Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.68	1.68	495,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1	1	1	1	250,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.5	1.52	1,078,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.38	2.38	2.38	2.38	32,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	1,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.75	16.75	16.5	16.75	330,100
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	33	33	33	33	500
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57.5	56.5	57.5	189,600
San Miguel Corp. B	64.5	65	64.5	65	323,600
Universal Robina Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	30,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.15	4.25	4.15	4.2	245,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.36	2.36	2.36	2.36	1,005,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	5,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.115	0.12	0.115	0.12	490,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	800,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	8.6	8.6	8.5	8.5	57,000
Ionics Inc.	0.7	0.72	0.7	0.72	70,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	60,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	720,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000
Music Corp.	0.175	0.175	0.17	0.17	250,000
Philtread Holdings Corp.	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.2	360,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	110,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.2	3	3	19,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.33	500,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	22,000,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	1,250,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14.5	14.5	14.25	14.25	4,800
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	400,000
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	1.66	1.68	1.66	1.66	75,016,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.42	0.44	0.42	0.44	200,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
Jollibee Warrants	16.5	16.5	16	16	133,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	5,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	7	7.5	7	7.5	7,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.85	4.9	4.8	4.8	988,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	10,000
Emp're East Land Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	10,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.95	0.96	0.95	0.95	920,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	200,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	1,814,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	30,000
Omico Corp.	0.0022	0.0022	0.0022	0.0022	12,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	1,350,000
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.0014	0.0014	0.0014	0.0014	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	2,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	50,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	100,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	20,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	551,350	17,811,550.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	113,130,920	207,378,140.00
PRO	3,942,000	15,488,100.00
Mining	13,380,000	410,100.00
OIL	3,170,000	20,600.00
GRAND TOTALS :	134,174,270	241,108,490.00

	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	360.27	DOWN 1.57
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,485.72	UP 5.49
PRO	455.64	DOWN 1.93
Mining	1,183.90	DOWN 28.13
OIL	1.06	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	627.37	UP 3.08
Composite	1,034.76	UP 1.03

NO. OF ADVANCES: 18; NO. OF DECLINES: 16; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 33; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 67
NO. OF TRADES: 774

DISCLOSURES

BALABAC Resources & Holdings Co. Inc. disclosed that after its decrease in authorized capital stock from P1 billion to close to P73.8 million, the total number of issued, outstanding and listed shares will also be P73.8 million net of fractional shares.

* * *

EBECOM Holdings Inc. announced that the Securities and Exchange Commission approved its increase in authorized capital stock from P10 million to P400 million.

* * *

SUN Life Financial Services of Canada Inc. declared cash dividends of 17 Canadian cents per share to shareholders of record as of Feb. 26 and will be payable on March 31.

* * *

DIZON Copper Silver-Mines Inc. announced the resignation of Ramona Feliciano as director. Elected to replace her was Rafael Dizon Jr. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

Feb. 17, 2003

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	0.926612	1.000000	53.924000
Japan	Yen	0.007703	0.008313	0.448300
United Kingdom	Pound	1.495923	1.614400	87.054900
Hongkong	Dollar	0.118810	0.128220	6.914100
Switzerland	Franc	0.680332	0.734214	39.591800
Canada	Dollar	0.608612	0.656814	35.418000
Singapore	Dollar	0.527954	0.569768	30.724200
Australia	Dollar	0.549104	0.592593	31.955000
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.457923	2.652590	143.038300
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.247103	0.266674	14.380100
Brunei	Dollar	0.526455	0.568150	30.636900
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000104	0.000112	0.006000
Thailand	Baht	0.021499	0.023202	1.251100
UAE	Dirham	0.252304	0.272287	14.682800
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.079200	58.194800
ArgentinaPeso	0.291387	0.314465	16.957200	
Brazil	REAL	0.254075	0.274198	14.785900
Denmark	Kroner	0.134545	0.145201	7.829800
India	Rupee	0.019377	0.020912	1.127700
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.243878	0.263193	14.192400
Mexico	New Peso	0.085702	0.092490	4.987400
New Zealand	Dollar	0.511291	0.551785	29.754500
Norway	Kroner	0.132939	0.143468	7.736400
Pakistan	Rupee	0.016017	0.017286	0.932100
South Africa	Rand	0.111538	0.120372	6.490900
Korea	Won	0.000777	0.000838	0.045200
Sweden	Kroner	0.109877	0.118579	6.394300
Syria	Pound	0.022063	0.023810	1.283900
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026614	0.028722	1.548800
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000581	-0.000627	0.033800

Peso hits 18-month low

From page B1

"We have the luxury of borrowing the money when we need it and we don't need it now. We have other options," Mendiola said.

He said the government had borrowed $1.5 billion from the offshore market and would resort to other forms of local borrowings like the upcoming retail treasury bonds to raise additional funds.

"We have the RTBs and we have also lined up the auction of 20-year bonds sometime next month," he added.

Customs shuts down 410 more bonded warehouses

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BUREAU of Customs shut down another 410 bonded warehouses yesterday, bringing to 821 the total number of warehouses closed so far in the government's ongoing effort to plug revenue leaks and stamp out smuggling.

In an interview, Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo said 1,878 bonded warehouses were registered as of end-2002.

The customs bureau closed 322 on Jan. 16 and another 91 on Feb. 11.

"I am not finished with them yet. We still plan to close some more as part of our efforts to make the bureau's operations more efficient. The system of having bonded warehouses was created for a specific purpose which was to help exporters but had been abused through the years," Bernardo said.

Within the week, Bernardo said he would phase out public bonded warehouses.

There are currently 69 inactive public warehouses and 19 active facilities.

Bernardo said some warehouses were used to smuggle goods and evade tariffs and taxes.

Induction of new Ejap board today

THE NEW set of officers of the Economic Journalists Association of the Philippines will be formally sworn into office today.

Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura will induct into office the 12th Ejap board: Ted Torres (Philippine Star); Maryann Reyes, vice president/internal (Philippine Star); Vicente Lopez, vice president/external (BizNews Asia); Pearl Bantillo, secretary (Malaya); Lawrence Agcaoili, treasurer (Today), Eileen Mencias, auditor (Manila Standard); Amethyst Ma (AP), Abigail Ho (Philippine Daily Inquirer), Elaine Ramos (Manila Standard), Jun Ebias (Bloomberg), Gil Cabacungan (Philippine Daily Inquirer).

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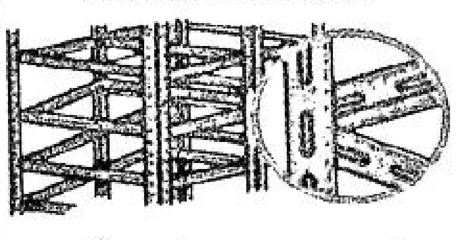

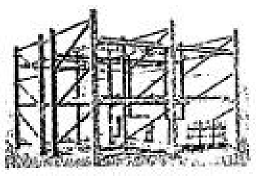

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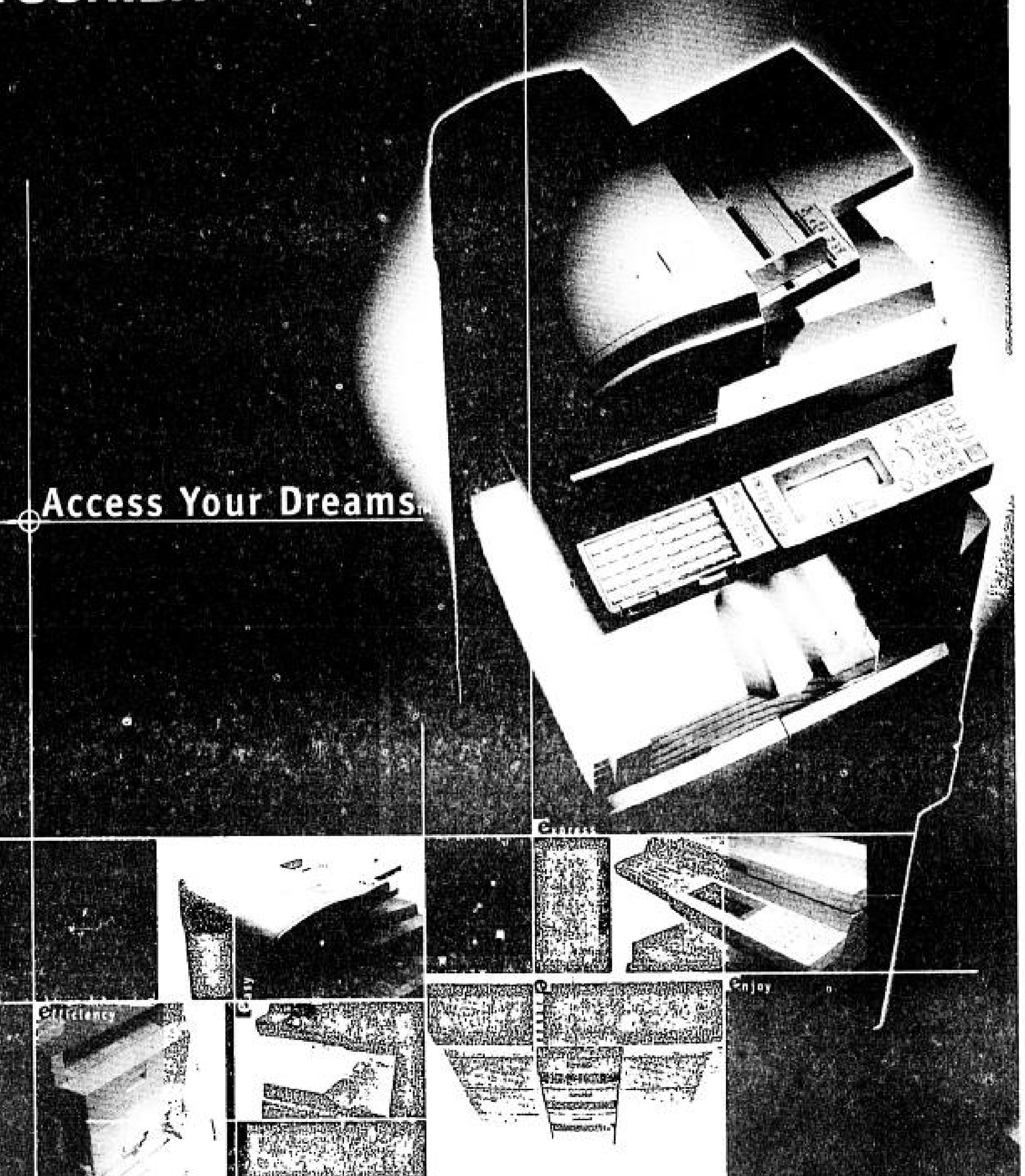

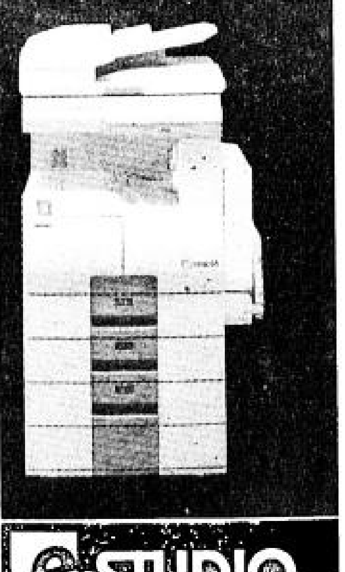

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TERMINATION ON HOLD

John Hay consortium ordered to submit improved proposal

THE BASES Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) decided on Friday to put on hold its earlier decision to terminate the lease agreement with the Fil-Estate consortium in Camp John Hay.

The consortium, which owes the government over P1.15 billion in rental arrears exclusive of interests and penalties, has sought a restructuring of the agreement to allow it to comply with financial and developmental commitments under more flexible terms.

Having failed to arrive at mutually acceptable terms and conditions, the BCDA board of directors unanimously decided on Feb. 4 to exercise the option of contract termination granted to it under the lease agreement.

A personal appeal by Fil-Estate's chair Robert John Sobrepeña to the BCDA board en banc, however, caused the BCDA board to reconsider its position and give a window of opportunity for the consortium to comply with its obligations under the lease.

In consideration of CJHDevCo's representation that it would present a substantially improved proposal for the restructuring of the rental arrears and its development performance shortfall, the BCDA agreed to suspend the termination of the contract.

In a statement issued yesterday, the BCDA made it clear that the revised offer should address its concerns and focus on how to pay the arrears and complete development commitments, and "that it should not be a mere rehash of previous offers that BCDA had already rejected."

The BCDA also stressed that it would not accept a settlement proposal that banked on revenues for projects that have not even started.

However, the BCDA board declared that it should revert to its original decision to terminate the Camp John Hay lease should the parties fail to arrive at a mutually satisfactory settlement.

CJHDevco chief counsel Gina Alarez said the consortium was ordered to pay in cash an estimated P1 billion in debt.

The company, she said, had been negotiating a settlement agreement that involved an escrow arrangement using CJHDevco's available assets as collateral, including a set of P400 million worth of log homes, 189-room John Hay Manor and the CAP Convention Center. *With a report from Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

DTI considers privatization of Citem, PDDCP

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry is keen on shifting part of the government's trade promotion agencies, specifically the Center for International Trade and Exposition and Missions (Citem) and the Product Development and Design Center of the Philippines (PDDCP), to the private sector.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II said the medium-term goal for the DTI's Trade Promotion Office (TPO) was to give back to the private sector the tasks of shouldering and mounting promotional services. Citem and PPDDC are under the DTI-TPO, which has been criticized for having too many units that lead to a duplication of functions.

"I think the private sector would create better designs and respond more quickly to market forces," Roxas said.

Roxas said the DTI was looking to the private-led Hong Kong Trade Development Board as a model in finding markets for the country's products and services overseas. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

RP seeks country-specific deal with EU on tuna row

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE PHILIPPINES is urging the European Union to make its proposed tuna export dispute compensation package country-specific to ensure that the country would maximize the benefits of the increased quota allocations.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas said the EU's proposed settlement offer had been packaged as a first-come, first-serve basis which was feared to give Thailand an undue advantage in the availment of higher allocations.

Roxas said Thailand was closer than the Philippines to EU and it was a much bigger producer of canned tuna than the Philippines. Canned tuna contributes between $100 million and $200 million to the Philippines' annual exports.

The EU is currently deliberating on a proposal by its mediators to provide a minimum access volume on the canned tuna exports of the Philippines and Thailand to appease these countries that have sought the World Trade Organization to mediate on the trade dispute.

The MAV gives a specific amount of canned tuna imports from the Philippines and Thailand based on a percentage of total consumption in Europe that would get a significantly lower tariff rate than the prevailing 24 percent.

The Philippines and Thailand have so far shared a common stand in seeking fair treatment from the EU which had granted duty-free access to products, specifically canned tuna, from its former colonies in the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries.

The disagreement on the matter of dividing the MAV is seen to further delay a settlement of the canned tuna dispute because the Philippines is insisting a country-specific allocation.

Roxas is keenly awaiting the voting results of the EU members on the settlement offer being championed by the United Kingdom. Roxas said the deal could get scuttled if Spain and Portugal—staunch opponents of a compensation package—would get both France and Italy in blocking the proposal.

Equitable PCI posts 5-fold profit increase

EQUITABLE PCI Bank, the country's third largest private bank, registered a profit of P178.79 million in the fourth quarter last year, bringing its full year 2002 net income to P726.79 million.

The full-year profit was higher than the P500-million income target of the bank for the period. It was also more than five times the bank's 2001 profit of P140.18 million.

In documents filed by Equitable PCI Bank with the Securities and Exchange Commission, the bank reported that its net interest income in the fourth quarter last year rose to P1.411 billion from P1.117 billion in the comparative period the previous year.

The bank's "other incomes" grew to P1.646 billion as a result of higher service charges, trading gains and miscellaneous fees. However, Equitable PCI's "other expenses" also rose to P2.837 billion from the year-ago level of P2.276 billion. *Elena R. Torrijos*

RCBC profit hits ₱1.33B

RIZAL Commercial Banking Corp., a universal bank controlled by the Yuchengco family, posted an unaudited consolidated profit of P1.33 billion last year, more than five-fold the bank's 2001 profit of P260 million.

Based on documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission Friday, RCBC's higher profit came primarily from the 56.6-percent increase in the bank's net interest income to P4.2 billion. This was driven by the drop in the bank's carrying costs, the growth in consumer portfolio of subsidiaries and the bank's low-cost current account and savings account deposits.

RCBC's profit in 2002 was also the result of higher trading gains, which pushed other incomes up by 22.2 percent to P6.3 billion.

The robust 2002 performance of RCBC was achieved despite the bank's allocation of P2.344 billion in provisions for probable losses, 35.9 percent higher than the previous year's provisions.

Unlike its peer banks that showed stagnant performance or even a decline in their loan portfolios last year, RCBC reported that its total loan portfolio expanded by 8.1 percent. *Elena R. Torrijos*

URC net income up 32%

UNIVERSAL Robina Corp. (URC) posted a net income of P533.38 million in the fourth quarter of 2002, up 32 percent from P404.37 million earned in the same period the previous year.

The company's net sales and services improved 9.4 percent from P5.54 billion in the last quarter of 2001 to P6.1 billion in the same quarter last year. Income from operations also rose 5.7 percent to P649 million from P614 million.

URC attributes the income results to the decline in the company's expenses in the period and the increase in the revenues generated by its business units.

With the continued increase in the sale of URC's consumer food products like snacks, candies, chocolates and biscuits, the company's consumer food business generated a total of about P4.6 billion, a 10.5-percent increase from the revenue generated during the same period in 2001.

URC's commodity foods business unit, meanwhile, also ended the last quarter of 2002 with a 15.8-percent hike in net sales to P654.4 million. *Michelle V. Remo*

Greetings

Our warmest greetings to the board of directors, management and staff of STI-Universal Worker, Inc. on your formal launching on the 18th day of February 2003.

It is heartening to note that this newly-formed company seeks to equip Filipino nurses interested in working in the USA (and eventually, in the United Kingdom) with cutting-edge skills through a comprehensive, intensive, highly-individualized and flexible training program geared towards helping them succeed in the competitive overseas job market through review classes in CGFNS, NCLEX, TOEFL, and TSE, as well as an acculturization program to prepare them for their social and professional lives in their country of assignment. Likewise, we commend the company for its initiative of offering 100% scholarship opportunities to deserving candidates, plus visa-processing services and employment assistance through STI's global affiliate—Global Resource for Outsourced Workers, Inc. (GROW)–courtesy of its local and US offices.

Indeed, considering that our health professionals, including nurses, are the country's competitive edge and important contributors to foreign exchange earnings, we are one with STI-Universal Worker, Inc. in its goal of contributing to the enhancement of the skills, competence, professionalism and high standing of the Filipino worker in the international job market. This, in addition to the Filipino already being proficient in English, highly-flexible, and strongly service-oriented, will enhance our image as a competitive workforce that is given due preference over our Asian counterparts.

To STI-Universal Worker, Inc., our sincere congratulations and best wishes for success in your endeavor to generate globally competitive Filipino nurses.

Mabuhay!

Hon. Mar Roxas
Secretary, Dept. of Trade and Industry

It gives me great pleasure to announce and celebrate the birth of a new company with a clear vision – "To be the most sought after and most respected training facility for healthcare and other professional workers."

We are proud to contribute to the goal of "transforming futures" by equipping professionals with skills that will allow them to compete in the global workforce market.

The synergy generated by the partnership between Universal Worker and STI will generate the infrastructure to educate and train healthcare and other professionals by providing access to a greater array of resources, more intensity of instruction and increased personal involvement to achieve each learner's goals.

We pledge to support national development through the continuous and progressive enhancement of professional competencies.

We move forward with confidence as we rely on the combined strengths of Universal Worker and STI to make this meaningful contribution a reality.

Jorge Garcia, M.D.
Chairman of the Board, STI-UWI

Today's occasion marks the culmination of a dream and a vision.

Twenty-three years ago, I left the Philippines for the United States to pursue a deep desire to hone my craft as a nurse. The road was not easy. I had to struggle a few times, learning to quickly deal with unfamiliar equipment, new people, cultural differences, a regional twang that sounded so different, and new work processes.

Along the way, I met several wonderful mentors who served as role models and paved the way for me to reach the professional heights to which I had aspired.

Thus was born a deep desire in me to transfer all the "lessons learned" from my years of experience of working abroad. I want to "give back" to nursing in the Philippines.

Universal Worker was started with another professional nurse, Dr. Heather Kopecky, and a businessman, Al Danto. Our vision was to assist Filipino nurses acquire the necessary skills to become personally and professionally successful as they claim their rightful place in the global workforce. We busied ourselves with developing, improving, and re-designing our education and training techniques and materials to achieve the best possible results.

This partnership with STI comes at just the right time. Together with STI's resources and reach, we hope to enlarge our circle of influence so that more people can benefit from our improved technologies.

We forge together as one, parlaying on each other's strengths, to equip Filipino professionals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be globally competent. This we aim to achieve through offering continuing education programs. Global competence will be achieved through extensive preparatory classes for foreign licensure examinations.

The dream is now a reality. Our mission, "to add value to the lives of nurses everywhere," will live on. We are truly grateful for this opportunity to serve.

Annabelle R. Borromeo, RN, PhD
President, STI-UWI

STI-Universal Worker, Inc.: Synergy for a world-class Filipino professional

Born out of a common mission to carve out a niche for the Filipino professional, two industry leaders in education and professional training have forged a partnership that aims to make the Philippines the preferred source for skilled professionals.

STI Education Services Group (STI ESG), a leading provider of ICT education services, and Universal Worker, Inc., a US-based consulting firm that specializes in training and educating professionals for the global market, have joined forces to form STI-Universal Worker, Inc. (STI-UWI), a company committed to prepare qualified professionals for a successful life and career in countries other than their place of birth.

Quality ICT education backed by a global network

With twenty years of leadership in ICT education, STI continues to empower students with quality learning that is responsive to the needs of the global job market. It pioneered the concept of franchising education, enabling STI to make quality education affordable and available to a larger number of people.

The Academic Development and Program Transfer (ADEPT) system is the vehicle by which STI's academic standards are under its fold. At the core of ADEPT are two guiding principles: maximizing value-added learning and the delivery of good quality, cost-effective and quality education. Key to this is the centralized nature of courseware development and faculty accreditation.

Under the guidance of renowned academic and industry leaders, STI continues to make breakthroughs in developing Filipino talent and providing job opportunities to its graduates through its affiliate company, Global Resource for Outsourced Workers, Inc. (GROW), and now, STI-Universal Worker, Inc.

Global workforce planning

With the birth of STI-UWI, the mold of traditional review modules was broken. Here, trainees undergo comprehensive, intensive, highly individualized and flexible training and review programs, in preparation for the examinations and accreditations required by their specific industries. They are mentored by professionals who have been involved in prestigious board review and public speaking institutions. All are either master or doctorate degree holders and considered experts in their respective fields.

Unique to STI-UWI is the acculturation program designed to prepare candidates for successful social and professional transitions to the country where they will relocate. This value-added consultation is seen as a key factor of STI-UWI trainees having a 98% passing rate in licensure exams in the US. The high passing ratio is also attributed to motivating the trainees to achieve the right mindset to become "world-class professionals."

By acknowledging the good that is in every Filipino, STI and UWI have built a strong foundation in what STI-Universal Worker, Inc. stands for today. And once STI-UWI's reach expands, as it undoubtedly will, Filipinos will gain an even greater edge and come even closer to becoming globally competitive, thanks to the "meeting of minds" of these two great institutions.

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HILARIO S. MURILLO, SR.

VICE-CHAIRMAN of Cardinal Santos Medical Center
Peacefully joined his Creator on Feb. 16, 2003
at the age of 68.

His bereaved family, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Felicidad Chapel of Arlington Memorial Chapel, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Mass will be offered at the following dates:

Feb. 17, 2003	12:00 n.n.
Feb 17-21, 2003	6:00 p.m.
Feb. 22, 2003	7:00 a.m.

Interment will be on February 22, 2003, Saturday at 9:00 a.m. (after the 7:00 a.m. Mass) at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque.

Please omit flowers.

"Lord, my allotted portion and my cup,
you have made my destiny secure..." Psalm 16:5

AUGUSTO "BOBBIT" SANCHEZ

Former Labor Minister

Peacefully joined his Creator
on February 15, 2003 at the age of 70.

His wife **Lolita**, together with children **Chito, Tina, Josephine, Anthony** and **Vic**, request pious readers, especially their relatives and friends, to join them in praying for his eternal bliss in heaven.

His body lies in state at their residence at 36 Kagandahan Street, Kawilihan Village, Barangay Bagong Ilog, Pasig City, Metro Manila.

A Mass will be celebrated at the Immaculate Concepcion Parish Church, Pasig Plaza, Pasig City at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, the 20th of February, 2003.

Announcing the untimely demise of our beloved

JUDGE EMILIO BANUSING LEGASPI

of San Jose, Antique

Presiding Judge
Regional Trial Court
Branch 22, Iloilo City

peacefully joined his Creator on February 12, 2003 at the age of 67.

His loving wife **DR. CLYDIE R. YABUT-LEGASPI**; children **EMILIO FELIPE LEGASPI II & JOSEPHINE IMPERIAL-LEGASPI, MA. FILIPINAS LEGASPI, ATTY. EMILIO RODOLFO LEGASPI III & MARIA ELEANOR BANATIN-LEGASPI, ATTY. EMILIO LEGASPI IV, DR. FAITH MARIE LEGASPI**; grandson **PHILIP JOSEPH I. LEGASPI**, relatives & friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body now lies in state at the family residence at Bantayan St., San Jose, Antique.

Interment will be on Monday, February 24, 2003 after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at the San Jose Cathedral.

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die." — **John 11:25-26**

In Loving Memory
on the 25th Death Anniversary of

DR. GREGORIO D. DIZON

Nov. 5, 1898 – Feb. 18, 1978

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ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE
Mother Ignacia St., Q.C. .... 7:30 AM & 7:30 PM

His daughters, **Gloria (Nene) D. Mercado & Angelita D. Lilles**, request relatives, friends & pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

LEONOR ESPINOSA GUERRERO

Retired Provincial Librarian of Zambales
Passed away peacefully in the Grace of our Lord
on February 16, 2003 at the age of 82.

Her bereaved family: husband **Paulino A. Guerrero** (†); children **Linda and Aguido Hermogino, Fidel** (†) **and Eileen Bringas, Rene and Alice Halim, Adrian and Carmencita Alcoseba, Alvin and Angelina Parungao, Ma. Luisa, and Victoria and Eliezer Capacio**; brother and sister, grandchildren, nephews and nieces request relatives, friends and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Nuestra Señora dela Strada Chapel, Katipunan Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on Thursday, February 20, 2003 after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

SERGIO "Serge" K. DONATO

Peacefully joined his Creator
on February 16, 2003 at the age of 78.

His loving children **Lia, Adrian, Cecile, Alice & Edgar, Daniel** and **Jun**; sister **Pacing**, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to join them in praying for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His body lies in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels in Guadalupe, Makati City and will be transferred to San Agustin, Alaminos, Laguna on February 20, 2003.

Interment will be announced later.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

John 3:16

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MARCH 1 (SAT) 9AM-4PM
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MASSAGE

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★ BONG 0920-2624192 ★

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Lapu Lapu St. Res. Condo;
Legaspi Villugo Rada
FCC Bldg. Three (3)
Office Condos;
Chino Roces(Pasong Tamo)
Cor. 8,200sqm.
Near Don Bosco/Makati
Cinema Square

QUEZON CITY
Libis E. Rodriguez Ave.(C-5)
33,162 sqm. Frontage 120M
Near Eastwood City;
West Triangle EDSA 10,951 sqm.;
Surigao St. 600sqm.Between
Del Monte/West/Quezon
Avenues; New Manila
Hemady 6,542 sqm.;
20th Ave. Cubao 1,136sqm.

SAN JUAN
Greenhills Ortigas Ave.
1,857sqm.,
W/ Commercial Bldg.

VALENZUELA
Polo Mindanao Ave. Ext.
19,299 sqm.

MANDALUYONG
Ortigas Center
San Miguel Ave.
Corner Lot 10,509 sqm.

PASIG CITY
Rosario Ortigas Ave. Ext.
45,746 sqm.

PARAÑAQUE
San Dioniso Coastal Road
Rear Quirino Ave. 6,459 sqm.

MUNTINLUPA
Madrigal Business Park
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6.4Has Pasig 10 mins. to Ortigas T-6414589, 09175372340

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MARIKINA

Gnhts. new4br 2Mneg 9487112

QUEZON CITY

980T only 260m² nr Rbinson SM Fview Bung 09206022995

Comml Lot 250M² Bgalow w/3br Crge # 32 Cmwlth Ave. CHEAP 3.2M neg DBO 9221655 / 4353723 /0222455

Diliman 4br/4tb 553m² P7.2M BFQC 400m² P3.0M 4752630

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3M Puso ng Baguio Bldg., Session Road, Baguio City
Tel. Nos.: (074) 444-4137/304-1214/422-7119; Telefax: (074) 442-2338
e-mail: topland-phils@skyinet.net
Cell Nos.: 0917-376-8426 (Beth) / 0918-349-5137 (Joy)

Exclusive marketing agent of:

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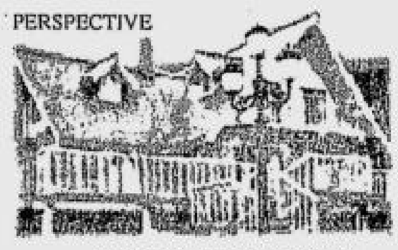
HOUSING

PERSPECTIVE



LOG CABIN HOMES
Km. 16, Marcos Highway, Tuba, Benguet
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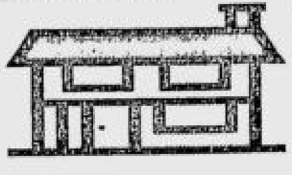
It's purely LOG CABIN TYPE HOMES that will be built within the subdivision depicts a country style living with an all Pine Tree and Tropical Fruit Bearing trees surrounding ambience that makes the subdivision truly refreshing… exciting… breathtaking…



CALGRYP HILLS
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Located just 90 meters away from the all weather Quirino Highway (formerly Naguilian Road) and 6 kms. only from the heart of the City passing through Cooyeesan Mall (4.5 kms away or less than 10 mins. Drive). **Only few lots available.**

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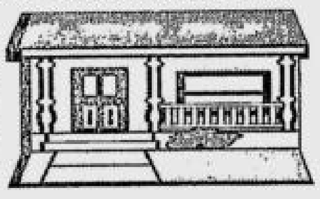

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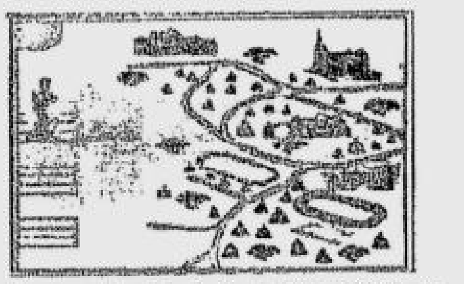
- Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Meeting Place: 3M Puso ng Baguio Building, Session Road, Baguio City
- Meeting Time: 10:00 AM

CONDOMINIUM UNITS
INA MANSION CONDOMINIUM



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OTHER AREAS

188m² 2.2M neg T-3611850

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MABOLO, CEBU CITY LA-548sqm: FA-200sqm Office#8263373 Res# 7765609 Cell# 0917-2052165

BATANGAS

RushiCanyonWoods Btngas P6.5M Call 0918-5052638

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LEON GUINTO NEAR QUIRINO AVE. Bnew/3Sty/3BR/3TB/grge P3.215M 8903461 loc 34

PASIG

2br Crisanta Tower Near VVerde CClub 0917-4149898

QUEZON CITY

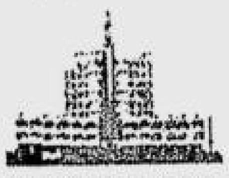
Cubao Condo P1.4M4381480

RushiFernandina 88 100sqm 4.8MNeg 3br 2tb 0916-7069277

CONDO/TWNHSE

QUEZON CITY

READY FOR OCCUPANCY



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OTHER AREAS

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TAGAYTAY VIEW LOTS-300m² up w/ club & golf memb 5yrs No DP INT. FREE 09175022722

LOT

OTHER PROVINCIAL

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SALCEDO REMODELED 1BR MUST SEE NR MKT SPORT 5473471

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CONDO/TWNHSE

QUEZON CITY

3BR B-new P30T/month Near G'hills 0916-3725766

COMMERCIAL/ RESIDENTIAL

TAGUIG

TAGUIG MANALAC SUBD. OFFICE CONDO 5473471

APARTMENT

MAKATI

2BR 2TB 899-2148•5227127

PARANAQUE

10-E St. United Pque V Subd. Office#8253373 Res# 7765609 Cell# 0917-2052165

QUEZON CITY

2BR COMM'L RESD'L ALONG JPNY LINE NR MKT SCH 9279844

Cubao P3.5 std Lady 4381480

•P6.5T 2BR T-926-7383

WAREHOUSE/ FACTORY

53 GOV PASCUAL WHSE 3610652

BEDSPACE

Resdn'l/Furnish 2PerRm Male Single Bed T897-3770

RM/Bedspace 899-2148•5227127

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ISUZU

IZUZU ELP 150 6468221

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CARS

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TOYOTA

COROLA 97 T722-2222

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CAR VANS 410-0495

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C/O HILON COMPOUND - BO. MAYAPA, CANLUBANG, LAGUNA
AUCTION DATE: THURSDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2003 10:30AM SHARP
VIEWING DATE: WEDNESDAY 19TH FEBRUARY 2003
9:00AM - 5:00PM AND MORNING OF SALE DAY
REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT: PHP20,000 (UPON REGISTRATION)

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OFC STF 09208090709 ADRIL

OFFICE STAFF 09192535623 GLENDA

PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

CAREGIVER TRNG 5276418

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late FELICIDAD S. TABERNERO has been extra-judicially settled with waiver of rights, participation & ownership among her heirs as per Doc. 212, Page 44, Book I, Series of 2003, before Atty. Clarissa Serina-Ramos, Notary Public Mandaluyong City.
(PDI-Feb. 4, 11, & 18 2003)

PERSONAL

Dear Jojo Del Rosario
Better late than never...since you are very special in my heart, greeting you a belated Happy Valentine mean so much to me, knowing that I have been blessed with a wonderful friend like you..its more than a gift I ever received. Wishing you all the love and happiness...Emy

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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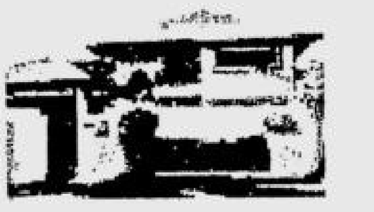

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At: 16/F, Tower I, The Enterprise Center
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Auction Date: Saturday 22nd February 2003 - 10:30am prompt
Viewing Date: Friday 21st February 2003
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TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

Date: January 29, 2003
Reference No.:

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. Contract : SPO1.CB.Lr-0323 - Construction and Installation of 230 & 69 kV Substation Equipment for Cabanatuan Substation
2. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall consist of furnishing all construction plant, labor, materials, supplies, tools and equipment (except for materials and equipment specified to be furnished by TRANSCO), constructing complete the 230 & 69 kV Substation.
3. Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid is P41,412,800.00 from Internal Cash Generation.
4. Application for Eligibility is open to Filipino contractors who have the legal, technical and financial requisites of the contract to be bid/project with the following License and Registration Particulars as specified in the Eligibility Documents:
   License: **"Category AA" - Specialty: Electrical Works**
   Registration: **"At Least Large A - Specialty: Electrical Works"**
5. Application for Eligibility shall be evaluated using "PASS/FAIL" criteria and only Eligible Bidders shall be invited by Transco in the bidding. All bids equal to or lower than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be evaluated based on the responsiveness of the contractor's offer to the contract under bidding subject to Postqualification before an award is made. Bid Prices submitted higher than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be rejected and returned outright.
6. Eligibility Documents and Forms will be available for issuance on **February 10, 2003** at the Bids and Contracts Management Department, Second Floor, Building No. 2, NPC-OBC, National Transmission Corporation, Agham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1104, Telefax No. 921-2308 upon presentation of Letter of Intent, Contractor's License and a payment of non-refundable fee of P800.00 per copy.
7. Deadline for submission of duly accomplished Application for Eligibility, Forms, documents and statements shall be on or before **February 23, 2003** and shall be submitted at the registration office and address mentioned above. If the date is a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.
8. Contractor, not yet included in the Transco's List of Registered Contractors, who wishes to participate in the public bidding, in order to facilitate eligibility check/ screening, are requested to register with the registration office mentioned above by submitting the following basic requirements which should be maintained current and updated at least once a year. A Certificate of Registration will be issued to contractors upon approval.
   - Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) business name registration or Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) registration certificate, as appropriate;
   - Mayor's permit and/or municipal license for the current year;
   - Taxpayer's Identification Number;
   - Notarized statement of the prospective bidder that is not "blacklisted" or barred from bidding by any government agency, office or corporation, including, in the case of procurement of civil works, non-inclusion in the "blacklist" of contractors issued by the CIAP;
   - Audited financial statements, stamped "received" by the BIR or its duly accredited and authorized institutions, for the immediately preceding calendar year, showing, among others, the prospective bidder's total and current assets and liabilities inclusive of Income Tax Return and Receipt;
   - Contractor's License
9. TRANSCO reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids or request for registration without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
10. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) W. SM. PANGILINAN
Chairman
Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI - Feb. 12, 15 & 18, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council
HOUSING AND LAND USE REGULATORY BOARD

RESOLUTION NO. R-737

Series of 2002

AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. R-656, SERIES OF 1999, BY RESTORING RESOLUTION NO. R-543, SERIES OF 1994, AUTHORIZING JOINT VENTURE PROJECTS BY AND BETWEEN SUBDIVISION DEVELOPERS AS A MODE OF COMPLIANCE TO THE BALANCED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROVISION OF REPUBLIC ACT 7279

WHEREAS, Resolution No. R-656, dated 15 December 1999, limits joint venture projects as a mode of compliance to the balanced housing development provision of RA 7279 to those entered into by and between a developer and the local government unit or any of the government housing agencies, thereby, revoking Board Resolution No. R-543, Series of 1994, which allows similar undertaking by and between subdivision developers;

WHEREAS, private sector participation in socialized housing development and production has considerably slowed down due to this limitation;

WHEREAS, the Board finds it necessary to amend its current rules in order to encourage private sector participation in socialized housing development and production;

WHEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that Resolution No. R-656, dated 15 December 1999 of this Board, be amended by RESTORING Resolution No. R-543, authorizing joint venture projects by and between subdivision developers as a mode of compliance to the Balanced Housing Development provision of Republic Act 7279;

BE IT RESOLVED FURTHER, AS IT IS HEREBY FURTHER RESOLVED, that strict monitoring be implemented to assure no joint venture project entered into between subdivision developers be used repeatedly as a socialized housing compliance and that all other rules, regulations and resolutions of the Board referring to joint ventures for socialized housing projects inconsistent herewith be AMENDED or MODIFIED accordingly as they are hereby AMENDED and MODIFIED.

APPROVED, 20 November 2002, Quezon City, Metro Manila.

MICHAEL T. DEFENSOR
Chairman

JOSE S. CALIDA
Undersecretary, DOJ
Ex-Officio Commissioner

ROMULO Q. M. FABUL
Commissioner and
Chief Executive Officer

EDUARDO R. SOLIMAN, JR.
Undersecretary, DILG
Ex-Officio Commissioner

TERESITA A. DESIERTO
Commissioner

For: AUGUSTO B. SANTOS
Deputy Director-General, NEDA
Ex-Officio Commissioner

FRANCISCO L. DAGNALAN
Commissioner

JOEL I. JACOB
DPWH
Ex-Officio Commissioner

Roque Arrieta Magno
ROQUE ARRIETA MAGNO
Commissioner

Attested:

CHARITO B. LANSANG
Board Secretary

POEA

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DBP Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION FOR NEGOTIATED OFFER

The Development Bank of the Philippines will entertain offers on a First-Come, First-Served basis at the Asset Management Department, 2nd Floor, DBP Head Office, Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City for the following properties on CASH BASIS:

CODE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM BID
REAL ESTATE			
BULACAN			
AMD-MR-12	Along Camia St., Manzano Subd., Brgy. Ibayo, Marilao	294 m² vacant residential lot (TCT No. T-351786 M)	P 940,800.00
DAVAO			
AMD-ED-5f	Lot 22 Blk 5, Kristina Homes Subd., Lizada, Toril, Davao City	116 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-347751) with building and improvements	P 179,980.00
LUCENA			
LRD-157	Merchan St., Lucena City	805 m² commercial lot (TCT No. T-30703) with building and improvements	P 21,868,900.00
CHATTELS (sale on "as-is, where-is" basis)			
AMD-JB-13	Dalaruan, Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro	M/V "Super 85", an 85-footer motorized passenger ferry vessel, twin engine, catamaran type, capable of carrying 185 persons, with machinery and navigational equipment	P 16,983,000.00
AMD-ED-13a to 13m	Along National Road (near Sta. Anastacia Elem. School), San Rafael, Sto. Tomas, Batangas	13 units various machinery and equipment for fruit juice processing.	P 1,520.00 to 98,560.00
AMD-MR-15	Brgy. Mationa, Tayabas, Quezon	One (1) assembly of cone-type ricemilling machine, locally fabricated, 20-25 cavans per hour capacity, with accessories.	P 45,000.00

Forms for negotiated offers may be obtained from AMD-Acquired Asset.

For inquiries, please call telephone numbers:
893-7172 or 8189511 loc. 2144/2218/3404 for Code starting with AMD; and
892-3836 or 8189511 loc. 2128 for LRD-157

ASSET MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

(PDI--Feb. 18, 2003)

JOBZ resumé central AT Onstage

GREENBELT

On **February 24 and 25, 2003**, the INQUIRER's **JOB MARKET** will host **"JOBZ Resumé Central"** at On Stage Greenbelt. A two-day activity geared at gathering and collecting resumés with the aim of building a database of possible applicants for **JOB MARKET** advertisers to further make their hunt for the right applicant seem almost effortless.

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JOB Market
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MAKATI	:	892-5578, 811-4361, 811-4370
KALAW	:	528-0213, 527-3342
MEGAMALL	:	635-0219, 635-0220

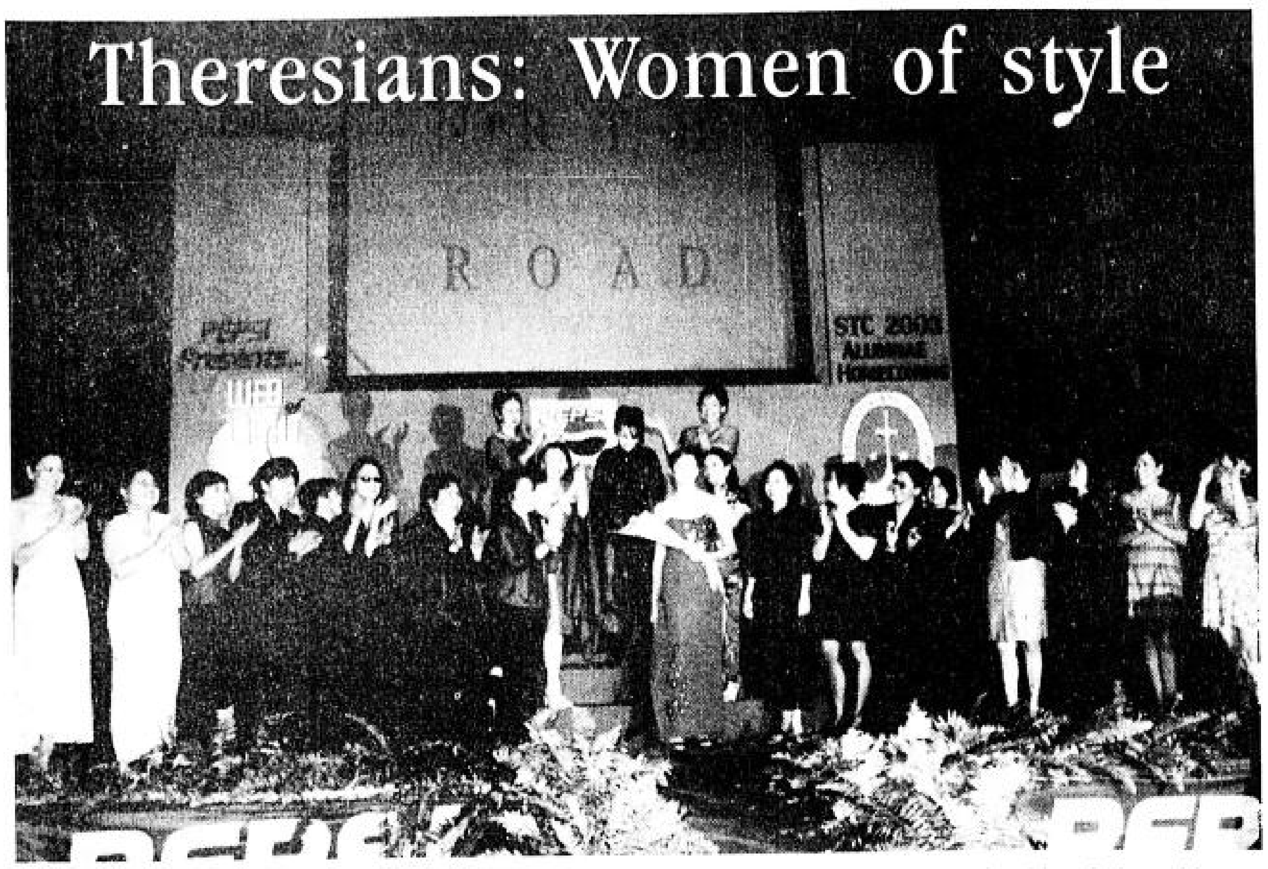
Email: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph

People, Events & Products

Aries Espinosa, Editor

aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Theresians: Women of style



MEET the following women: Gertrude, doctor; Lani, lawyer; Eileen, corporate executive; Glenda, insurance consultant; Marjorie, accountant; Becky businesswoman. What do these and fifteen other women have in common? Besides being all members of St. Theresa's College Quezon City High School Batch '78, they carry the distinction of being in the selected group who recently modeled the fashion creations of batchmate Delby Panaguiton-Bragais. These gutsy ladies participated in a much-applauded 20-minute fashion show number, one of the highlights of the STCQC 2003 alumnae homecoming held last Jan. 25. The segment featured an array of styles, which included summer wear, cocktail outfits, corporate attire and evening gowns. What was remarkable about these women was despite their age (bordering on the early 40's), they carried themselves with aplomb, strutting their stuff with pluck, amidst wild cheers from the audience. Coming in various shapes and sizes, from top-heavy, reed-thin, petite, round-shaped to statuesque, Delby and her models successfully managed to convey a show that was illusion dressing at its finest!

Delby is a product of the New York Fashion Institute of Technology and has her shop, Northroad, located at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel. Behind her fashionable creations lies her design philosophy of celebrating one's individuality. This motto was brought to the fore through this particular show wherein she presented women's clothes as varied and as personalized as the women who wore them. These Theresians agreed to model, albeit with initial reluctance for some, overcame pre-showtime jitters, and armed with a lot of verve, did themselves proud, proving that fashion modeling is not just for the sleek-bodied, but for any body who can confidently carry figure-enhancing designs. Who knows? A repeat performance might be in the offing for these women.

For complementing Delby's designs and complementing their look, these Theresians want to thank Hairbytes for their hair and make-up and Rio for their fashion accessories.

Shown, from left, are Lala Gonzales, Connie Cruz, Agnes Calleja, Tes Jaramillo, Ditas Martelino, Cecile Bautista, Marjorie Batoon, Yam dela Cruz, Delby Bragais, Wena de Leon, Glenda Alog, Divina Panaguition, Aleli Nuguid, Gertrude Reinoso, Luli Victor, Becky Chan, Nina Encarnacion, Bessie Rivera. At second row are Diana Prado, and Peewee Lapid, and at third row are Lani Somera and Eileen Araneta.

Samsung unveils cutting-edge phones

THERE'LL be wider choices of mobile phones with the launch of sleeker and trendier Samsung phones.

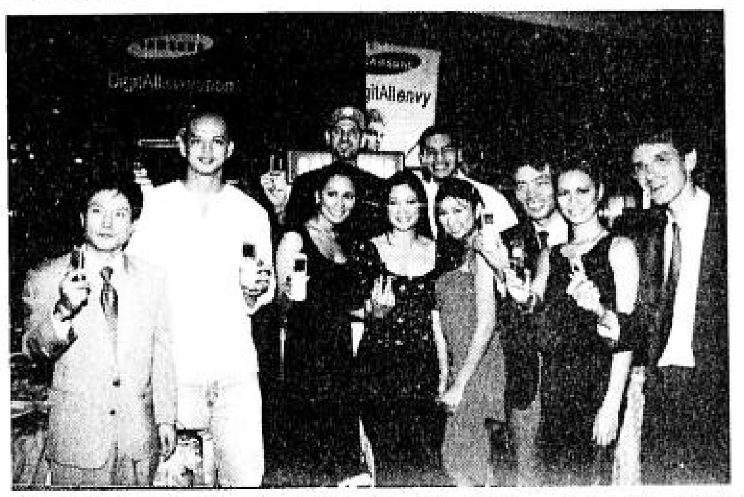
Samsung Electronics Philippines Corp. president Sang Youl Eom led the grand launch at the Diamond Hotel on Roxas Boulevard last week. Hosted by celebrities Willie Nepomuceno and Giselle Sanchez, the show was a blast not only with the new phones but also with the wit and humor of the hosts.

Samsung, a relatively new player in the mobile phone market, introduced its first unit in 2001. Customer response was favorable, and prompted the company to come up with new models loaded with cutting-edge technologies anchored in color and sound features.

The new models are the A-800, which stores 2,000 phonebook entries, the T-200—the first Dual Auto Folder Phone, the A-500, T400, and the T-500, which is primarily intended for female mobile phone users. The T-500 has a 32-cubic zirconia encrusted outside, life functions that include a calorie counter, biorhythm, and fat index.

The new models were developed to highlight color and sound features, such as a 65,000-color screen and up to 40 polyphonic ring tones.

Samsung is the world's third largest manufacturer of mobile phones with a 10-percent market share. It is also a conglomerate of 63 subsidiaries, and operates in 46 countries.



HOOP stars John Ferriols, Mick Pennisi, and Romel Adducul join beauties Maricar Balagtas (Miss International-Globe), Zorayda Andan (Binibining Pilipinas Universe 2001), Mirriam Chui (4th runner-up, Miss Asia-Pacific), and Michelle Reyes (Miss International-Tourism) with Samsung's top executives.

AT THE dealers' night at the launching of the new Samsung phone models were, from left, Maengdal Bae, VP for sales and marketing, Kwangbae Rho, general manager for Asian Mobile, Sang Youl Eom, president and CEO of Samsung Philippines, and Kudong Kim, manager for Asian operations.

HOSTS Willie Nepomuceno and Giselle Sanchez

SAMSUNG Philippines president and CEO Sang Youl Eom at the podium.

15th REGULA
CLUB MEETIN
KEN POLTAN
President, Seventhsto
Guest of Honor and Spe
Leveraging Techno
o Grow Your Busin

FIL-AM ENTREPRENEUR SPEAKS

Ken Poltan, an entrepreneur and a technology management professional trained in the United States and now president of seventhstorm, a company based in New York, Manila and Copenhagen, was guest of honor and speaker during the 15th regular club meeting of RC Makati-Legazpi. Ken spoke on 'Leveraging Technology to Grow Your Business'. Ken is the son of RC Makati-Legazpi president and book author Rodd Poltan. RC Makati-Legazpi, one of the Makati-based Rotary clubs under Rotary International District 3830, meets every Thursday noon at the Caffé Maestro in Makati City.

GLOBALCARE FOUNDATION INAUGURATION

Globalcare foundation for Lifelong Learning Inc. was inaugurated recently at the Eastpoint Business Center, East Service Road in Taguig with the following guests of honor (from left): Dr. Eleazar Lim, chief Taguig-Pateros Hospital, Marion Rivas, Globalcare Taguig administrator, Jasmin Manahan, Globalcare president, Taguig Vice Mayor Loida Labao Alzona, Dr. Jackie Rivas, director, businessman philanthropist Boydee Dizon and Dr. Rosario de Ocera, director. Already operating a thriving branch in Caloocan City, Globalcare Foundation hopes to correctly train women from Taguig and points south in a Tesda-approved caregivers course for future recruitment abroad. To enroll, call Marion Rivas at tel. 812-8291.

Product FILES

A must-read entrepreneurial manual

BEST-SELLING marketing author and Ten Outstanding Young Persons of the World 2002 awardee Josiah Go recently released "The Direct Selling Entrepreneurial Mindset", an entrepreneurial manual that bares the 7 keys to attaining financial independence and personal freedom through direct sales and network marketing. "The Direct Selling Entrepreneurial Mindset" shows how just about anybody, with the right skills, attitude and mindset, can become an entrepreneur even without huge capital. It was written in light of the present economic situation wherein the country needs more job creators than job-seekers. The Direct Selling Entrepreneurial Mindset, Go's 10th book since he debuted as a marketing author ten years ago, is available at all National Bookstore outlets.

The Direct Selling
Entrepreneurial
Mindset
Josiah Go

Globe's giveaway: new Nokia 3315 with any G-Plan

GLOBE Handyphone spreads a whole "lotta lovin'" this Valentine's season by giving away the cool Nokia 3315 handset free with every successful G-Plan application.

Beginning Feb. 5 until March 31, new Globe subscribers who avail themselves of any of the G-Plans can show off their new Nokia 3315 handset. This groovy phone lets one enjoy the fun features of a screensaver and the exciting possibilities of a picture editor. It also comes with a free Hi-Memory SIM that can store up to 300 phone book entries and up to 65 messages.

Apart from the cool Nokia 3315, G-Plan subscribers may also choose the Motorola T190, also offered free with any G-Plan. Globe is likewise offering tremendous discounts on the trendiest MMS-capable handsets such as the Nokia 7650, Sony Ericsson P800, Nokia 3530, Nokia 7210, Nokia 6610 and Nokia 6100 for new G-Plan subscribers, and get even bigger discounts for a second subscription under the Family Values Package.

This offer gives even more value to the five different G-Plans offered by Globe to suit the varied lifestyle and cell phone requirements of consumers today. G-Text is the plan that's perfect for all self-confessed text enthusiasts who can text to their hearts content with 500 free text messages and 20 minutes of free calls for just P500 a month. For subscribers who need to strike a balance between calls and text messages, the G-Mix plan offers 350 free text messages and 100 free minutes for only P800 a month. And for those who just love to talk, talk and talk, the G-Plan has just the thing for such people: G-Talk, G-Talk Plus and G-Max give as much as 750 minutes of talk time and 650 free text messages.

Globe's latest offer makes for a truly memorable Valentine's for all cell phone lovers. Sign up with the unbeatable G-Plans at any of the Globe Telecom Business Center or HUB and walk away with a free Nokia 3315 today.

A 'TIGASIN' PARTNERSHIP

Wellmade Manufacturing Corp., maker of Speed Detergent Bar and Powder, has entered into a partnership with Super Radyo DZBB to air a special public service segment within the top-rated morning program 'Saksi sa BB' meant to pay homage to the resiliency of the Filipinos. Called 'Ang Pinoy Tigasin', the portion features inspiring stories of heroism of everyday Filipinos told on radio by New York Festival Best News Program awardee Mike Enriquez. Shown is Enriquez sealing the agreement on this project with Antonio Sy Peng of Wellmade Manufacturing Corp. with (from left) Tony Chong of Prime Advertising Systems Inc., Manuel Sy Peng Jr. of Wellmade Manufacturing Corp. and Mei dela Pena of Prime Advertising as witnesses.

STRATEGIC PLANNING TREK IN PANGIL

Young Entrepreneurs Society founding members hold strategic planning trek in Pangil, Laguna. Shown, from left, are Ray Jimeno, Judith Pospos, Michelle Zamora-Arce, Randy Garlitos, Ronnie Vivar, James Talla, George Bonquin Jr and Gigi Felizar. Not shown are Joel Wayne Ganibe, Nadet Gonzales and Angel Vijandre.

E-mail: pr_real_estate@inquirer.com.ph

REAL ESTATE

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

MONTHLY AMORTIZATION OF P650

1,000 families to own steel house and 75-sq.-m. lot

Text and photos by Tessa R. Salazar

SOME families will now be missing their old tires on their roofs, their bancas and their "home along da riles."

This is because 1,043 families living in the flooded areas of Malabon and Navotas, as well as those living along the railroad tracks in Balagtas, Bulacan will soon be living in one community in Pandi, Bulacan.

For a monthly amortization of P650 each on an average 75-square-meter lot, each 20-sq.-m house will be made of steel and sugarcane bagasse. The total house and lot package is estimated at P80,000.

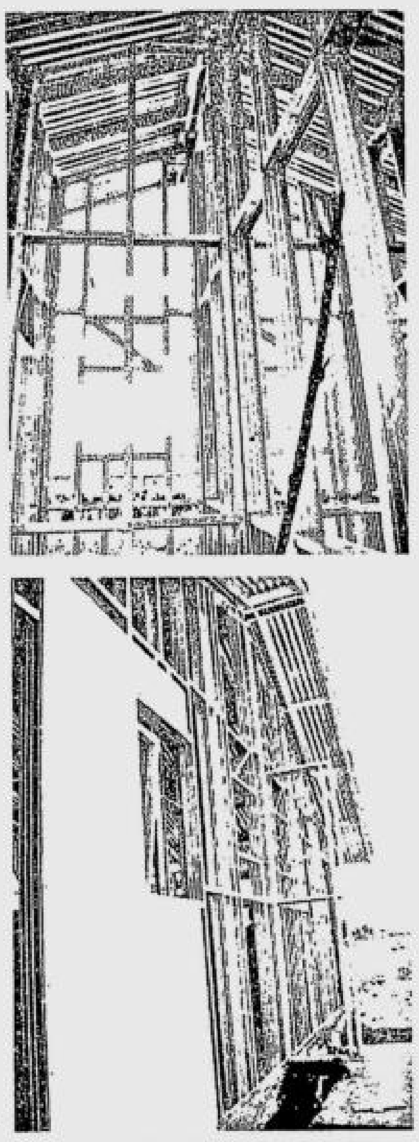
The families are members of the Neighborhood Association for Integrity and Solidarity, or Nais. Most of them are teachers, factory workers, vendors and dependents of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) who want to stop paying monthly rentals and buy a permanent settlement of their own.

Appeal

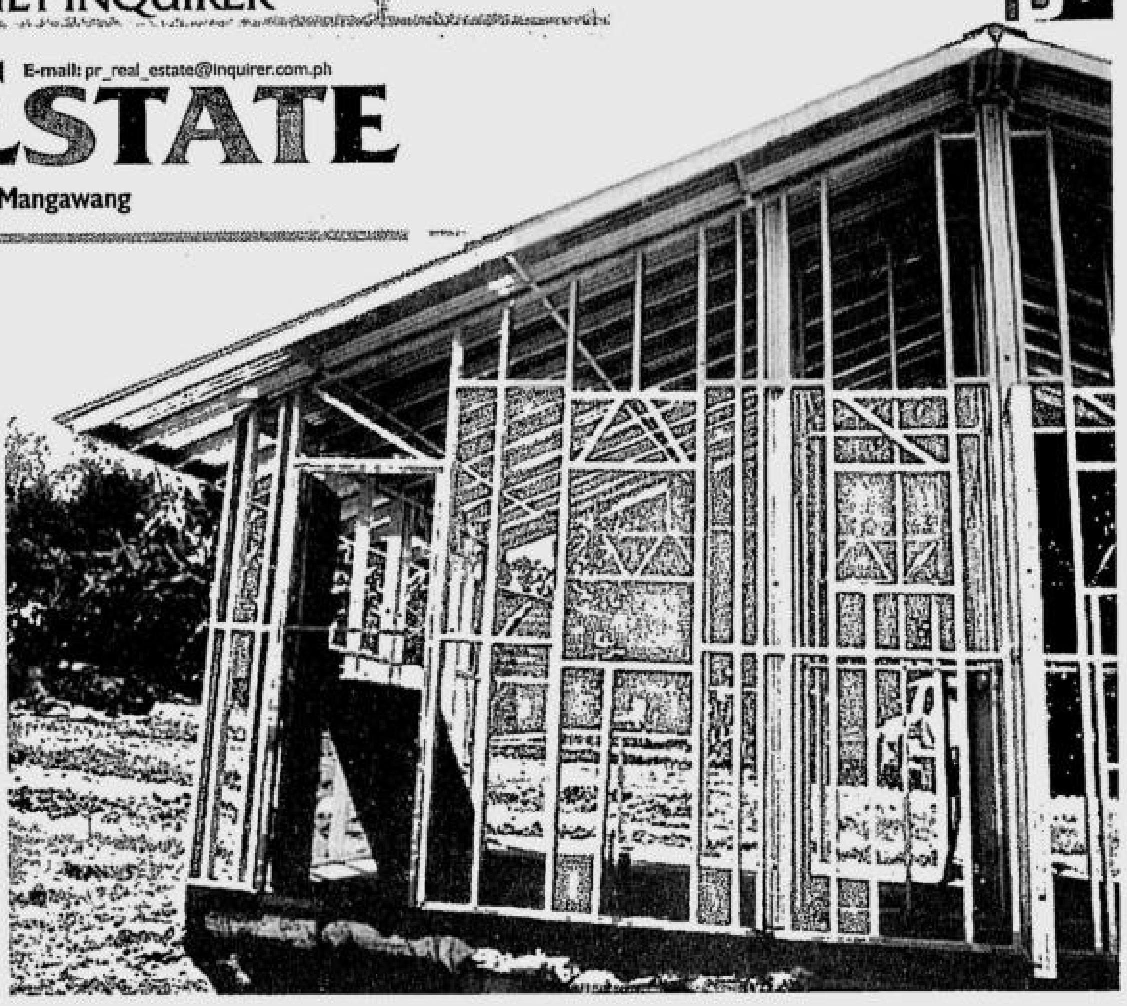
In a Feb. 16 launch in Barangay Cacarong, Matanda, in Pandi, Bulacan, homeowners' association president Nick de los Santos appealed to first phase homeowners—composed of 259 families—to pay their monthly dues faithfully because the community is required to maintain an 80-percent average in terms of collection efficiency.

"Let us prove to them that we deserve to become beneficiaries of this project," he said.

Phase 1 was sold out Dec. 26 last year. Members of phase 1 are expected to construct their structures and reside in the area until at least the end of 2003. Phase 2 is now on its final stage of documentation while buyers of phases 3 to 5 are still completing their requirements.



'SUGAR-COATED' HOUSE
The house will be filled with sugarcane bagasse with the help of the Nais homeowners association.



HOUSE OF STEEL
The first P40,000-housing unit for relocated families in Pandi, Bulacan.

Collection efficiency

Luzviminda P. Ladores, vice president of the mortgage operations group of the National Home Mortgage Finance Corp., said the remaining phases that have not been rolled out yet would only depend on the collection efficiency of the earlier phase.

"We urge you not to be delinquent in paying your monthly dues so that phases 2 to 5 will be approved," Ladores said. The government granted a loan of P6.8 million paid to the landowners in lump sums.

Lot acquisition

The lot acquisition each family availed of amounted to P26,400. For site development, each beneficiary is entitled to an additional loan of P15,000. For the unit, each is entitled to a maximum of P40,000.

The Social Housing Foundation of the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Associations (Creba) makes possible the P40,000 cost per unit through its steel framing technology and Enviroboard sugarcane bagasse.

"The average lot area in phase 1—75 sq. m—wouldn't (be possible) in Manila," Ladores said.

To ensure the sustainability of the community, its members are planning to pool resources together and establish livelihood projects such as transport and market cooperatives.

The housing development is an off-site project of the Community Mortgage Program of the government's NHMFC. The originator of the project is the National Housing Authority.

The housing project for the Nais Homeowners Association—phases 1 to 5—has a total land area of 114,662 sq. m and costs P45,864,800.

The projected cost per square meter is P400. The landowners are Delfin S. Rivera, lawyer Agapito S. Rivera and Alejandre S. Rivera.

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AVAILABLE THROUGH DEALERS NATIONWIDE

CO welcomes the Dominguezes to their new house at the Maria Luisa Subdivision in Caloocan City. With Co are, from left, Ritchie Davila, Judelyn Abeto and Yoly Sanchez of Habitat and Ronald Rubi, Jody Gadia, Ruel San Juan, Millied de Villa, Abel Tejam, and Jane Austria of Handyman.

Handyman
DONATE A NAIL

Handyman turns over house donation to 'Donate-A-Nail' beneficiary

HANDYMAN recently turned over its house donation to the Dominguez family, the beneficiary of its "Donate-A-Nail" project.

Edmundo and Arlyn Dominguez as well as their children were welcomed to their new house at the Maria Luisa Subdivision in Caloocan City by Handyman president Willy Co as well as officials of Handyman and Habitat for Humanity.

First-time owner

This is the first time that the Dominguezes will have a home of their own. Although family members have long wished to have their own unit, Arlyn's salary as an electronic data processing assistant and Edmundo's earnings as a part-time waiter were not enough for them to afford one.

Apart from sponsoring the construction of the house through a financial donation, meanwhile, Handyman also contributed building materials with the help of its various suppliers. It also urged its customers to help in the project by giving tools that were offered at discounted prices and coin banks were placed inside its stores to encourage contributions.

'Build activity'

Handyman executives, store managers and staff also participated in the "build activity" during the initial stage of construction in November 2002.

Handyman launched its "Donate-A-Nail" project last year in support of Habitat for Humanity's "Tulong Mo, Tahanan Ko" initiative, which aims to provide decent shelters for less privileged families.

Handyman and Handyman's Do-It-Best are two of the country's leading home improvement centers with an extensive nationwide network of 35 branches.

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President C & C Studio
Former Managing Director, Hirschbedner & Associates
The Planning/Design of Hotels & Resorts "Know Thy Market"

PROF. DR. SOONTORN BOONYATIKARN (Thailand)
Doctor of Architecture, University of Michigan
Professor, School of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
Green Architecture Incorporating Energy and Ecology

MR. TAY HAO GIANG (Malaysia)
Director, Fire Safe Sdn Bhd
Past President, Malaysia Fire Protection Association and The Institute of Fire Engineers (UK), Malaysia
Practical Approach for Active and Passive Fire Protection Design for High-Rise Buildings

ARCH'T. LORENZ PE BENITO (USA)
Master of Architecture, Yale University, 1982
Former President ALY Development, New York, USA
Former Principal, M. Di Tulio/ Haena Development Company Hawaii
Facade As Photosynthetic Metabolic Machine: An Integration of Agriculture in Exterior Design

ARCH'T. JOSEPH FRANCIS WONG (Thailand)
Master of Architecture
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Lecturer, Division of Building Science and Technology
Standardization for Flexibility Multi-Level Design

MR. EMMANUEL R. CRUZ (Philippines)
Executive Director, Emergency Resources Center, Inc.
Basics of Crime Prevention Thru Environmental Design

MR. ANDREW MILLER (United Kingdom)
Director, Foster and Partners Architects and Designers, United Kingdom
MEGA Projects-Design Evolution

ARCH'T. NESTOR MANGIO (Philippines)
Principal Architect, N.S. Mangio Architects, Philippines
Former National President of United Architects of the Philippines
The Making of a Model Community Under Environmental Design

MR. MARTIN KLAASEN (Australia)
Managing Director, Lighting Images, Australia
Lighting Design and Architectural Harmony

REGISTRATION FORM

☑ Yes! I will participate in The 5th WORLDBEX SEMINARS 2003
20 - 22 March 2003 at The Philippine Trade Training Center, Manila Philippines

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'Green revolution' highlights building expo

By Tessa R. Salazar

IT'S the time for being green. From farm estates, to vegetarianism, to fruit shakes and clean air acts.

How does the construction industry, then, keep up with the fast-moving color of green?

Look at the design. Design an environment-friendly community, maintain house security using environmental design, or integrate agriculture in your exterior design.

Revolution in green

It's a revolution in green, as "green architecture" fuses with energy and ecology.

This is the highlight of the 5th Worldbex Seminars 2003, which offers the latest trend in construction technology, from March 20 to 22 at the Philippine Trade Training Center in Pasay City. Speakers from different parts of the world will discuss major issues and trends.

Furthermore, the exposition offers practical approaches for active and passive fire protection design in high-rise buildings.

Major issues, trends

Nestor Mangio will discuss how a model community influenced with environmental designs can be made in the Philippines, while Emmanuel Cruz will discuss the basics of crime prevention through environmental design.

US-based Lorenz Pe Benito will share his expertise on integrating agriculture in exterior designs in his talk "Façade as Photosynthetic Metabolic Machine."

Thailand's Soontorn Boonyatikarn will show how green architecture can be incorporated with energy and ecology.

Singapore's Carl Ettensperger will reveal the planning and design of hotels and resorts in "Know thy Market."

Australian Martin Klaasen will update the audience on lighting designs and architectural harmony and United Kingdom's Andrew Miller will discuss "Mega Projects: Design Evolution." Joseph Francis Wong of Thailand will lecture on standardization for flexibility multilevel designs.

Malaysia's Tay Hao Giang will discuss practical approaches for active and passive fire protection design for high-rise buildings.

Worldbex executive director architect Francisco Flameno said the seminar will tackle relevant and timely topics and interests in the building and construction scene by inviting world personalities in architecture, real estate development, interior design and engineering.

Special opportunity

"We brought them in as a special opportunity for the professionals to witness the world's best industry authorities without (the expense of) going out of the country," Flameno said.

The 5th Worldbex Seminars 2003 is part of Worldbex 2003, the 8th Philippine World Building and Construction Exposition set from March 19 to 23 at the World Trade Center and PTTC.

Worldbex organizers say exhibitors should book their slots as soon as possible for early bird rate through WSI at 531-6350 or 531-6374, fax 533-2026, e-mail shows@worldbex.ph, or log on to www.worldbex.com.

Santarosa Estates 2 introduces new homes

THIS Mediterranean-inspired homes integrate a balcony above the spacious carport.

THE INTERIORS of the improved models were designed by Erfe and Associates.

YOUR dream house has become even more, well, dreamier.

Posh residential subdivision Santarosa Estates 2 in Laguna is set to introduce three improved house designs that promise more functionality and provide better use of space to a discriminating public.

Dubbed the Grenada, Antigua and Dominica—with floor areas of 135 to 165, 110 to 135 and 90 to 110 square meters, respectively—the Mediterranean-inspired homes integrate a balcony above the spacious carport. Now, homeowners can opt to entertain guests amid the clean air and under the clear night sky of Santa Rosa, Laguna.

Festive launch

Interior designed by Erfe and Associates, the improved models will be presented to the public in a festive launch on Feb. 23. Good luck and prosperity in the Year of the Water Goat will be ushered in with a traditional dragon dance. An illusionist will be on hand to wow kids and adults, and a feng shui master will give his readings and impressions of the property and the year ahead.

Santa Rosa Mayor Leon Arcillas and real estate company LPHI president Manuel J. Colayco Jr. head the list of attendees of the launch event.

Built using the world-class Phenix system, the units are backed by a one-year warranty on workmanship and a 15-year warranty on structure.

Strategic location

The LPHI-developed Santarosa Estates 2, located on the Balibago Tagaytay Road, is conveniently near places of work, school and recreation.

Residents will surely appreciate the proximity to markets, restaurants, banks and multispecialty clinics. Part of Ayala Land's vision in the south, the property is only 40 minutes from Makati and a mere 20 minutes from Tagaytay. It is within easy reach of premiere educational institutions such as De La Salle-Canlubang, Ateneo Graduate School, Don Bosco Canlubang and St. Scholastica's Westgrove.

Just like other quality projects of LPHI, Santarosa Estates 2 affords its residents a wide range of amenities and thoughtful luxuries such as a multipurpose hall, swimming pool, basketball court, landscaped central park with children's playground, reliable water supply and 24-hour security.

How a real estate broker works

(Second of two parts)

By Alexis A. Acacio, Ph.D

BUILDING DREAMS

OUR column last week discussed our relationships with real estate brokers and how to deal with them. After one has firmed up a purchase decision on a specific property, it is time to go through the negotiation process. Your broker can be your partner and advisor in this process and can serve as a cushion for all the stresses that are experienced during the negotiation process. The objective of all parties is to have a transaction that is smooth and stress-free.

Offer and counteroffer

This is the part in which a prospective buyer offers a price with terms and conditions to a seller. The broker in this arrangement serves as the mediator between the two parties. Some buyers give a very low offer (for example offering a price which is about half of the fair market value of a property) and the broker simply tells the buyer that the offer might only insult the seller and may cause more harm than good. I have seen many supposed to be win-win deals that were pulled off simply due to a low and insulting offer from the buyer. The offended seller simply refused to renegotiate. It is best to make a fair offer.

Be honest with yourself on the maximum amount that you are willing to buy a property. What you can afford and how much value the property gives to you usually influence this.

A formal written offer is better than a verbal one. You may write all the terms and conditions under which you are willing to purchase the property—the down payment, the date of the next payment, financing arrangements, when to move in and take possession, etc. It is difficult to handle all of these details verbally.

Knowing how much to offer can be difficult for some buyers. If you are buying a property from a big developer, prices are more or less fixed.

But there are developers who give incentives and discounts if you buy on their terms. I know of one that gives a big discount if you buy in cash for their completed units or they can give you a bigger discount if you buy before the property is completed. Again, prices are still negotiable.

In buying properties from individual owners, make an offer that you would think is fair for both you and the seller. Some properties sell below the list price while some properties have sold at exactly the list or asking price. What you would want is to make an offer that has a good chance of being accepted by the seller. If it is not accepted, at least it should be good enough to stimulate a counteroffer.

In determining the price, compare the property you are considering with other properties in the community. When moving from a highly priced neighborhood to a lowly priced one, you have a tendency to see that prices are low. The opposite is also true. When moving from a lowly priced neighborhood to a highly priced one, you may have a tendency to see that the prices being offered are just too high. In both cases, it is best to assess the real value in the entire neighborhood.

It is important in negotiations that you talk about price, terms and other conditions. You just do not negotiate for price alone, you also negotiate for terms and the other conditions or "extras" that go with your property. As the saying goes, if you can't negotiate for the price, then negotiate for the terms. If things become too stressful, your broker is always there for you.

The closing

Once you have agreed on the price, terms and conditions of the sale, it is time to let go of your money. This stage is often the sign of real commitment to the deal. You can hold a property by an earnest money or a down payment. Again, all things depend on the written contract that you have made. Make sure that you have read and understood all of the items in the contract. The real estate broker makes sure that all terms and conditions of the sale, lease or mortgage are well in place. These include the price, mode of payment, other items included in the sale, etc.

ILLUSTRTAION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

The authenticity of the title is also checked with the Registry of Deeds where the subject property is registered. The contract is then prepared and the terms and conditions of the sale are listed. The services of a legal counsel are needed in this phase.

After all concerned parties have read and understood the covenants, they then sign on these documents. Once a Deed of Absolute Sale is signed (for the case of a property being sold), the title is then transferred in the name of the new owner.

Commission

After a hard day's work as they say, the broker earns the commission that is in most cases, paid by the seller. If ever you engage the services of a broker, please be nice to him or her.

Do understand that the selling cycle (from the first trip, through the negotiation, to the down payment and final payment) can take months and your broker is always there for you every step of the way.

Brokers only make their money through commissions and do understand that they do not sell real estate every day which means that they do not earn commissions every day. Most of the time, they still would have to share their earnings with other brokers who helped in the consummation of the sale.

Partner and adviser

Working with a trustworthy and qualified real estate broker is a very valuable asset. He or she makes sure that the interests of all parties are protected.

Brokers have a vast listing of properties that you alone may not have any access to. They work in a network of other brokers so that they can provide you a lot of choices when searching for a specific property.

Brokers can track down the history of the property that you are buying. They can advice you on the property that is best for you and will go with you every step of the way until you own the property that you have always dreamed of. But always remember that the final decision to purchase a property is always yours.

Of course you could sell your property on your own and you are free to do so. But considering the experience, expertise and integrity of brokers in your area, they may be the instruments in making sure that your real estate transaction is smooth and flawless.

In real estate transactions, it is always advised to consult with the broker or legal counsel of your choice.

(Alexis A. Acacio is an associate professor of civil engineering at the University of the Philippines. He is also a marketing and technical consultant to various real estate developers and construction companies. For comments and advice, you may reach him at aaacacio@pacific.net.ph or fax to 932-6986.)

'Safest cement plant' in RP

GONE are the days when the yardstick in measuring the annual production performance is solely based on how the production target has been met.

In today's manufacturing environment, equally important is to ensure that every employee and individual who enters the manufacturing site goes home safely.

Safest cement plant

Republic Cement Corp. in Norzagaray, Bulacan, was successful in achieving this objective last year when it was declared the "Safest Cement Plant" in the Philippines for the year 2002.

The Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau presented Republic Cement this award for its outstanding safety performance in every stage of the quarry and cement operations.

Safety programs

Republic Cement recorded the lowest record lost-time accidents among all the plants and lauded for its safety programs, systems of work and procedures for the employees and contractors and proper personal protective equipment (PPEs) for employees.

During the 49th Annual Mine Safety and Environmental Conference held in Baguio City late last year, Republic Cement also received the Titanium Achievement Award of the Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Awards (PMIEA) for its excellent environmental management in the quarry operations.

Drive against substandard building materials pushed

By Charles E. Buban

HOW many times have we seen structures crumbling at the slightest jolt of an earthquake or part of a house showing signs of significant deterioration a year after it was built?

Sadly, like the beef in an inadequate hamburger, inspectors are nowhere to be found so the country's largest group of subdivision and housing developers teamed up with a homeowners organization in voicing out their concern over the use and proliferation of substandard building materials in the country.

"Enough already," expressed members of the Subdivision and Housing Developers Association and the Federation of Resident's Associations (Fora). Both urged the government and the public to watch out against businesses that use poor-quality materials and cutting other corners illegally.

Victims also

"Developers are often being accused of using substandard building materials when in fact, we are also victims—these developers only bought these materials from their suppliers," revealed Jesus B. Atencio, SHDA national president.

Atencio noted that the situation if remained unchecked will only make buyers lose confidence on the developers, thus, decreasing their sales as a result.

Fora president Cynthia Moss agreed that "standards" is urgently needed.

"There are coated roofing materials, for example, that easily deteriorate in color and gloss and corrode with less than a year. This should be checked," she warned.

Since there is no government standard yet for coated roofing materials, Fora submitted to SHDA a resolution urging the group to lead against these substandard roofing materials.

"The developers will be the first one to know if their supplies shortchanged them since their home buyers will complain if they were not satisfied with the quality of their units," said Moss.

Advocating standards

In response to the homeowners' clamor, the SHDA met with the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry officials to formulate what industry standards can be done for doors, windows and roofs.

The SHDA believed such a move will definitely be beneficial to home buyers, especially for high-value projects that may take a while before the buyer discover they were shortchanged.

"Not even a litigation will help as this will only put our home buyers at a disadvantage situation," said SHDA chair Teofisto Guingona III.

He noted standards should be formulated for housing components such as materials for roofing, windows and doors since this will further promote efficiency, effect savings, avoid waste of materials and manpower and protect consumers as well as producers of housing.

"We are also opening our doors to the Department of Trade and Industry toward the establishment and adoption of industry standard for building and construction materials similar to international standards," said Guingona, who also proposed for the adoption of certain test and procedures for manufacturers of these building materials.

Asian forum

Atencio announced there is an Asian forum composed of 12 nations that the SHDA, as the private sector representative, will attend to advocate for an Asian building materials standards.

"We are leading this effort for we need to provide and facilitate supply and export of materials that would ensure better-quality products and materials we could use," he said.

In this regard, the SHDA has entered into an agreement with Boysen Paints and Cemex Philippines as official partners of developers and James Hardie Philippines as a major sponsor.

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Sydney Games venues designer at PIA confab

THE ARCHITECT whose firm designed the master plan for the Sydney 2000 Olympics sports facilities is arriving to address the 70th annual national convention of the Philippine Institute of Architects.

Philip Cox, considered Australia's No. 1 architect, will be joined by another highly respected colleague, Mark Neasbey, director of The Australian Centre for Value Management Pty. Ltd. Cox will talk on "Urban Renewal"; Neasbey, on "Asset Management—An Alternative."

The PIA convention will be held from Feb. 26 to March 1 at the Westin Philippine Plaza. It focuses on the theme "Architect's Visions: Diversity of Practice and Opportunities."

Other speakers and their topics are Singapore Minister for Housing Tony Tan, "Housing A Nation"; Malaysian architect-banker Ruslan Khalid, "Diversity of Practice"; Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, "Seeing Places, Finding Opportunities"; historian-columnist Ambeth R. Ocampo, "Turning Heritage into Opportunities"; and Jimmy Cura, "Marketing, the Lynchpin of Success."

Former Finance Secretary Ramon del Rosario Jr. will keynote, while Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel "Mar" Roxas III will open the trade exhibit on Feb. 27, assisted by Ms Sharon Cuneta, also at the Westin.

Cox is the urban planning expert behind the award-winning master plan for Shanghai, China. His firm, Cox Associates, did the master plan for the Sydney Games sports facilities, the aquatic center for swimming events, and the support stadium for the major athletics venue, as well as other Australian landmarks.

Neasbey, an expert in asset management, will suggest in his talk a role for the architectural profession in achieving better long-term value in buildings and infrastructure.

February seminar on buying, financing your first home

A TWO-DAY seminar on "Buying and Financing Your First Home" will be conducted by the Urban Institute of Real Estate on Feb. 20 and 27, from 1:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Max's Restaurant, Level 4, Robinsons Metro East, Marcos Highway, Dela Paz, Pasig City.

First-time home buyers will be guided away from common mistakes and frauds. They will also be guided toward a pleasant experience of buying and financing their first dream homes by removing uncertainties and gaining essential knowledge.

The seminar is subdivided into two modules. Slated on the first day is the buying module that covers the common mistakes of first-time home buyers; determining how much you can afford; the right type of home for you; criteria on where to live; the right neighborhood for you; what you should know about property taxes; tips on looking for bargain alternatives; services of real estate professionals; home inspection; negotiating the price and terms; the terms of the contract of sales and other expenses that you should be aware of and others.

Set on the second day is the financing module that includes tips on securing a mortgage; types of mortgages available, what you must watch out; how much down payment; government subsidized mortgages; seller's financing; beware of the fine prints; services of a loan broker; what you need to know about lease with option to buy; default and foreclosures; rights of buyers under Maceda Law, Presidential Decree 957 and other HLURB Rules.

For more details and reservation, call 681-0928 or e-mail urbanet@pacific.net.ph.

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Informal settlers to benefit from P156-M housing loans

By Tessa R. Salazar

MORE and more urban poor and informal settlers are said to have benefited from housing loans.

Through local government units, the government claims it is well on its way to fulfilling President Macapagal-Arroyo's pro-poor housing commitments.

Associations of informal settlers were assisted last year as they availed themselves of some P155.6 million in loans under the Community Mortgage Program (CMP) to assure the security of their land tenure and fulfill their housing requirements.

Bigger, more active role

National Home Mortgage Finance Corp. president Angelico T. Salud confirmed this figure, adding the LGUs have assumed a bigger and more active role in organizing the urban poor, as well as in packaging CMP loans, thereby providing informal settlers easier access to government housing loan assistance.

Salud said that of the three categories of accredited CMP loan intermediaries, which include nongovernment organizations and government corporations or agencies, LGUs had increased to 32 percent their share in originating last year's total CMP loans of P484.6 million.

Major share

A statement sent by the NHMFC noted that while housing NGOs had traditionally captured the major share of originating CMP loans, their share last year went down to P239.8 million, still a sizeable 49.5-percent share of total loans granted under the program.

Considered as the top performer last year was the National Housing Authority. The NHA was said to be the only government agency with CMP loan takeouts in 2002. The NHA took the lead as the originator with the single biggest loan performance of P89.2 million, comprising 18.4 percent of CMP loans granted.

As individual originators, the LGU of Pasig was second with P53.5 million CMP loans originated, followed by Marikina at P45.6 million and Antipolo with P37.4 million.

Quezon City originated P8.3 million in loans; Sta. Ana, Pampanga, P5.4 million; Cebu City, P4.9 million, and Caloocan, P571,959.

Location, location, location.

Strategically situated at the corner of Ayala Avenue and Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue (Buendia), The Columns, Ayala Avenue, Community Innovations, Inc.'s newest development, redefines high rise living. It provides the convenience and prestige of city life, and is within walking distance to the business, commercial and entertainment hubs of Makati's central business district.

The ideal first home of the young urban achievers who want to *live a few steps from everything*.

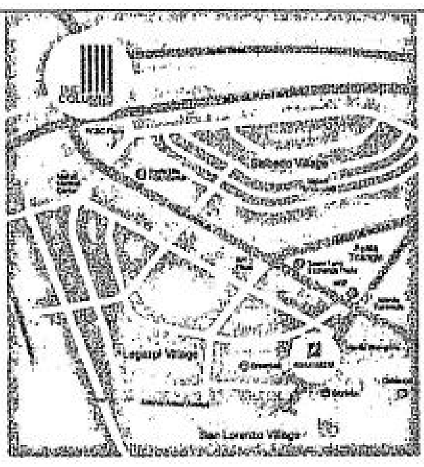
Garden in the city. At the Columns, Ayala Avenue, nature communes with urban living. Its design creates an open-space environment and relaxing surroundings. The interplay of greens and Zen gardens that adorn the Grand Lobbies of each tower give a soothing experience to residents and guests alike.

Three towers of power. Three towers on a continuous podium level define The Columns, Ayala Avenue. Each tower will have 30 storeys. 23 of which will be residential. The five-level upper ground parking is shielded from the outside by an artwork that gives the building prominence along Ayala and Buendia Avenues.

The layout maximizes the advantages of its prominent site, which allows more units to be facing the morning sun while avoiding the afternoon heat. Natural lighting and good ventilation are also taken into consideration in each of the studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom residential units - a rare feature among residential condominiums.

To create a more open feel for space, select units even have bay windows; others have balconies overlooking the city. The top three levels will house very private units, which have breath-taking scenery.

The Recreational Club, which stretches across the 7th floor podium of all three towers, provides residents a source of recreation and an ideal venue for socializing with other residents. It has a 25-meter adults' lap pool, kids' pool, spacious function rooms with spill-over area, a gym, game room with mini-theater, daycare center with indoor and outdoor play area, communal wine cellar, jogging path and transient rooms for the residents' guests - almost like a hotel!



To make it even more fascinating, the ground floor will have landscaped plazas, a row of cafes and al fresco dining spots, indeed the perfect setting for unwinding after a day's busy schedule.

Live a few steps from everything. If you're young, dynamic, and energetic, The Columns, Ayala Avenue lets you live a few steps from everything.

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Model units are available for viewing.
As low as P17,000 per month

Live a few steps from everything.

Imagine living close to your place of work, you never have to worry about parking again.

THE COLUMNS, Ayala Avenue. It won't just be near Makati's central business district but right on top of it! THE COLUMNS will rise right between Salcedo and Legazpi Villages. Just walking distance to the various office buildings in the area. Walk to work. Walk back for lunch. Take a nap. In fact, sleep the sleep of one who never has to worry about parking and driving again.

THE COLUMNS, Ayala Avenue. The ideal address for young, urban achievers who want to be near it all!

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Exportbank names marketing manager

EXPORT and Industry Bank recently appointed Century Properties Inc., one of the leading professional real estate marketing organizations focusing on properties located in the country's central business districts, as its marketing manager for the Exportbank Plaza.

The Exportbank Plaza is a 38-story premium grade building that has a unique three-street frontage as it is bounded by three streets, two of which are Sen. Gil Puyat and Chino Roces Avenue. It offers panoramic 360-degree views of Makati's ever-changing skyline as well as the famous sunset of the Manila Bay.

Features

On top of the uncommon 24-hour 7-day air-conditioning system provided by Exportbank Plaza, the outstanding features of this building include a column-free design for flexibility and maximized space, high-ceiling clearance to accommodate a large volume of wires and cables, 100 percent power backup, a first-class business center and wireless high-speed Internet access provided by Broadband Philippines.

Exportbank Plaza is ideal for IT or telecommunication companies because it has two entrance facilities to handle multiple communication carriers. It also has a provision for satellite and microwave dishes or antenna at the roof deck.

Village store construction to end soon

LEISURE Farms, the first hobby-farming and agri-tainment community is about to finish the construction of "The Village Store."

Located at the agri-tainment site, "The Village Store" will be a one-stop supply, novelty and produce shop and more.

Designed by New Zealand-based international design firm HBO+EMTB, it will feature neo-vernacular architecture in line with Leisure Farms' old new theme.

Featuring an anahaw roof along with other classic Bahay-Kubo-era visual elements and materials integrated into contemporary design, it will create a refrfreshing classic feel

50% of The Columns' first tower residential units sold

THE COMMUNITY Innovations Inc., an Ayala Land subsidiary, has sold 50 percent of all residential units of the first tower of The Columns, Ayala Avenue.

The Columns, Ayala Avenue, a three-tower residential condominium complex at the corner of Ayala Avenue and Sen. Gil Puyat (Buendia) Avenue, was formally launched recently.

The launch, which was timed with Chinese New Year festivities, carried the theme "Good luck. Good fortune. Good location."

Model units

The model units feature the studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units.

The Glorietta 3 model units on the third floor, were designed by Environments Collaborative, Sophia Ojeda and Tina Periquet, respectively.

Angela De Villa-Lacson, CII president, says the project's noteworthy sales performance only reflects the impressive features of the project.

All three towers are of 30-stories, the first seven stories of which will include a podium of parking and restaurants with al fresco dining.

Recreational club

On the seventh floor is the Recreational Club, a 7,000-square meter of space spanning the three buildings.

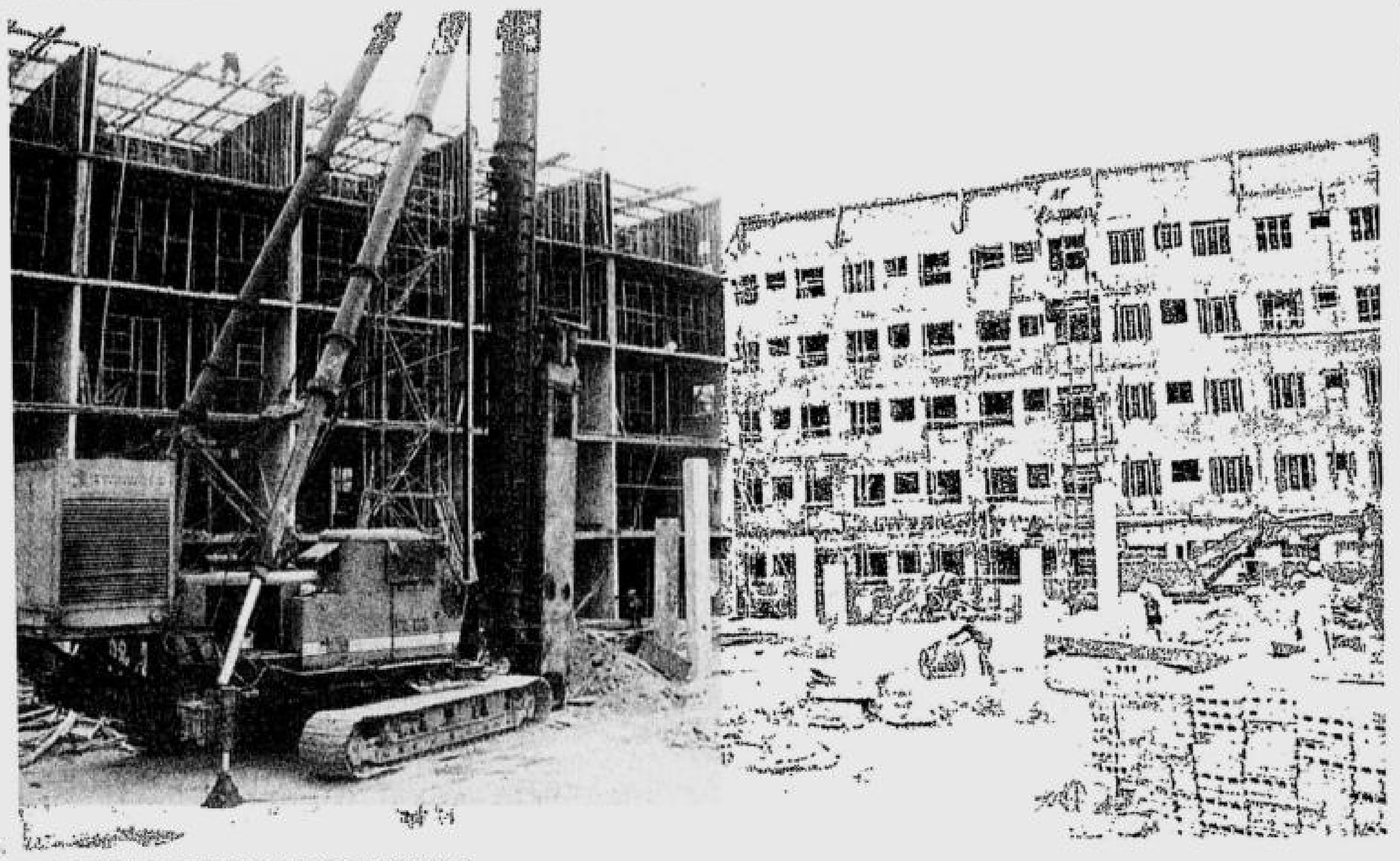
Amid lush greenery, the club has a 25-meter lap pool, a kiddie pool, gym and fitness center, a day-care center with indoor and outdoor play areas for residents' children, and a game room with mini theater. Also included are a communal wine cellar, an exercise circuit along the jogging path, transient rooms for residents' guests, a multipurpose outdoor area, barbecue areas and meditation alcoves.

'Must-have' property

The Columns, Ayala Avenue targets young urban achievers and starting families who desire quality-home living at the heart of the Makati central business district. Its introductory advertising campaign is focused on the statement: "Live a few steps from everything."

Esthetics, amenities and affordability combined with prime location make it a "must-have" property for those on the cusp of making it, and those who have already reached the top.

THE COLUMNS



UN GARDENS TOPS OFF 3 TOWERS
Housing developer Empire East Land Holdings Inc. has completed the structural shells of clusters 4, 5 and 6 of UN Gardens, a six-cluster residential enclave now rising near United Nations Avenue in Paco, Manila. Masonry works are under way for the three clusters while pile driving operations are ongoing for cluster 3. A joint venture of the City of Manila and Empire East for government employees and residents of Manila, the whole project is due for completion and turnover by the first quarter of 2004.

Nusa Dua coming up right in Alabang

FOR A FEW months now, motorists plying Commerce Avenue at Filinvest Corporate City have surely wondered about the two-story Balinese-inspired house being erected within a gated area.

Now with the banners all up, it is evident that Nusa Dua, the modern residential farm estate, seems to be coming up right in the city.

With clever Filinvest Land Inc. marketing, the idea of building a Nusa Dua showcase for its Tanza, Cavite location and future residential farm estates is a strategic move to make the concept more accessible for buyer orientation.

A 750-square-meter model has been developed, complete with Balinese retreat house furnished by Home & Beyond for the occasion, a garden and farm lot—a replica of a Nusa Dua residential farm. The showcase now features a greenhouse and rows of vegetables already in bloom.

Guests

Luminaries in the world of hobby farming, gardening, organic and herbal culture and agriculture are invited to the inauguration of the Nusa Dua model showcase scheduled Feb. 22, led by agriculturist Zac Sarian, landscaper Alex Westesmina and Jaime Galvez Tan and Beth Micaller.

Guests of honor are former First Lady Amelita Ramos, Agriculture Secretary Cito Lorenzo, the Indonesian Cultural Affairs, Muntinlupa Mayor Jaime Fresnedi, Rep. Raffy Biazon, Raul Roco and wife Sonia, Jul Dizon, Toni Parsons and Ging de los Reyes.

Pleasure trip

A "Day in Nusa Dua" is a pleasure trip to a Balinese experience, complete with a ceremonial ritual to be participated in by the Gotianun family and guests.

The thrill of harvesting vegetables from the farm is the highlight of the "Day in Nusa Dua." Each of the invited guests will be given a basket for the harvest experience.

Culinary expert Maur Lichauco, who recently authored a book "Oops...Don't Throw Those Weeds Away!" together with the collaborators of the book will educate guests with a fascinating discovery of how certain can be culinary delights.

Shang Grand Tower sales office soon at The Fort

CONSTRUCTION of the sales office and model units of the five-star plus Shang Grand Tower residential condominium is now in full swing.

Due for completion in April, located at Fort Bonifacio opposite Pacific Plaza Towers, the sales office will showcase two exquisitely furnished model units: 152-square-meter two-bedroom and also three-bedroom units with a total floor area of 274 sq. m. Handling the project are top building contractor Phil Sundt and Hong Kong landscape architects, Belt Collins.

In keeping with true Shangri-La style, the model units and the main development will speak of unparalleled beauty and luxury. Stunning from every angle, the 46-story Shang Grand Tower, located at the corner of Perea, Nieva and De La Rosa Streets in Legazpi Village in Makati, walking distance from Glorietta and Greenbelt 3, will offer a mix of elegantly designed one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom units. All units will be equipped with modern appliances. Amenities will include lush tropical gardens, a swimming pool and spa.

Due for completion in late 2005, the five-star plus Shang Grand Tower residential condominium is a development of the Kuok Group of Companies, developers of Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, the Enterprise Center and Shangri-La Plaza Mall. Other developments are in Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Malaysia, Canada and Australia.

Selling of units will start sometime this second quarter.

CALIFORNIA GARDEN SQUARE

Efficiency the name of the game

POPULAR housing developer Empire East land Holdings Inc. continues to lead the way in family friendly living concepts with its two-story, two-bedroom condominium layout for California Garden Square, a fast-rising, multi-cluster community development near the MRT-3 in Mandaluyong City.

The innovative, bi-level homes of California Garden Square offer comfort and privacy as the bedrooms at the upper level are separated from the lower level's living and dining area, which is generous enough for family get-togethers and intimate parties.

Designed to maximize every available space without compromising freedom of movement, California Garden Square's condominium residences range from 38 to 81 square meters in size.

Features

Empire East Land has designed power-conserving features into each unit such as well-placed windows and well-ventilated kitchen and bathrooms, a separate utility area for washing and drying at the first level and a storage room tucked below the stairway.

Each unit features built-in finishes and materials such as imported wood grain vinyl planks for the flooring, plastered walls with three coats of paint finish, custom-built undercounter kitchen cabinets, imported bathroom fixtures and provision for window-type air conditioning in the bedrooms.

"With everything having its place and purpose, a home at California Garden Square assures its residents of a high level of comfort and privacy," said Maricen Jalandoni, Empire East Land first vice president for operations.

Each building is equipped with a provision for Internet access, high-speed elevators, stand-by generators, cisterns and water tanks, an audio intercom system and a smoke-detection system.

Tropical-resort feeling

Outside the residence, Empire East's urban enclave is meticulously planned to welcome homeowners with an airy, tropical-resort feeling. It boasts of a wide interior road, two wide entry or exit points, landscaped rutondas and surroundings, a flower garden, a palm court, decorative trellis, provision for a nursery school and a Rodeo Drive-like shopping arcade on Libertad Street.

Its superior range of recreational amenities includes a 1,150-sq.-m pool deck with an adult's pool, a wading pool, sun deck and rock cascade and a clubhouse with a squash court, gym and multipurpose hall inside.

Affordable price tag

Complementing the well-thought-out home design and strategic location of California Garden Square is an affordable price tag. This, along with a choice of easy-payment schemes, makes a two-level home at California Garden Square especially well suited for middle-income families, young urban professionals and newly weds.

"California Garden Square is nearing the 30 percent completion mark," Jalandoni said. "Cluster Anaheim is now in the finishing stage while Cluster Burbank, Dayton and Carlton are in various stages of construction."

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

SALES ACHIEVERS
One Asia Development Corp. recently concluded its Celebrity Place grand launch travel incentive with the awarding of free trips to Hong Kong for two (inclusive of four days and three nights holiday) to its top three sales consultants who delivered a combined sales of P50 million within a period of one month. Shown are the awardees and, from left, One Asia president and chief executive officer Victor H. Manarang, awardees Tess Malco, Arnel Ariola and Ina Sunga and One Asia VP for sales and marketing Luis E. Icasiano.

Group promotes green architecture

ARCHITECT Amado P. de Jesus, immediate past national president of the United Architects of the Philippines, who is the current UP dean of the College of Architecture, appointed architect Amado P. de Jesus Jr. as chair of the UAP Green Architecture Movement.

As a result of the UAP focus project on environmental concerns in architecture, Amado de Jesus was named by the Department of Energy as Philippine representative to the panel of judges in the Asean Energy Efficiency and Conservation Best Practices Competition in Buildings for the years 2002 and 2003.

In 2002, two Philippine entries on Ayala Avenue in Makati won fifth place, Enterprise Building, and ninth place, the Ayala Tower One and Exchange Plaza. The Asean Building Competition for 2003 will be held in May in Cambodia.

Free lecture series

UAP national president Robert Sac has continued the focus project in green architecture and has helped promote the lecture series given freely to architecture students in colleges and universities, and to UAP districts and chapters in the country.

UAP Makati, Alabang and Fort Bonifacio will sponsor a lecture on tropical architecture tomorrow in Makati to be given by architect Stanley Fernandez.

UAP Laguna Batangas will sponsor another lecture on energy-efficient buildings in Sta. Rosa, Laguna on Feb. 21.

A forthcoming lecture also on energy-efficient buildings to be given by De Jesus will be sponsored by UAP Mags Manila for the DPWH in March.

Increasing awareness

The Green Architecture Movement or GAM emphasizes the interrelatedness between architect-designed buildings and the environment. It tries to increase awareness of green or environment-friendly and safe building materials.

The GAM advocates sustainable architectural design that allows building occupants to live, work and play in a healthy manner. It tries to increase awareness of the broad concept of energy efficiency in buildings. The GAM works to contribute to the effort to meet present construction needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet future needs.

UAP GAM members include architects Edgar Reformado, Geronimo Manahan, Estanislao Fernandez, Joven Ignacio, Mary Ann Espina, Angelo Manosa, Robert Mirafuente, Armand Tantoco, Aristeo Garcia, Raj Busmente and Raymond Sib.

E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph

BUSINESS

Meralco now owes ₱30B, scientists say

By Ronnel W. Domingo and Agnes E. Donato

THE MANILA Electric Co. now owes consumers nearly P30 billion, about P2 billion more than when the Supreme Court found the country's biggest distributor of electricity liable for excess charges, according to a group of scientists.

In a statement, University of the Philippines physics professor Giovanni Tapang, chair of the Samahan ng Nagtataguyod ng Agham at Teknolohiya para sa Sambayanan, said around P300 million was being added to the amount that Meralco owed its customers for every month that it failed to refund them.

The Supreme Court ordered Meralco in November last year to give back surcharges that it had been collecting from its customers since February 1994.

Meralco initially placed the amount of refund at P28.15 billion, but it later changed the figure to just P8 billion to P11 billion after the high court's ruling came out.

Tapang lamented that the reduction ordered by President Macapagal-Arroyo on the controversial purchased power adjustment charges was now meaningless.

As of last month, the cost of the PPA was again almost the same as the basic charge, he claimed.

"The impending unbundling of electricity charges and the twin proposals for automatic recovery of losses—Dicer and Décor—spell no relief for the people. The owners of the utilities pass on their bloated operational and maintenance costs to the people and thus our electric bills keep on increasing," Tapang said.

He said Dicer (deferred incremental currency exchange recovery) and Decor (deferred energy cost recovery) were just new names for the PPA and the currency exchange rate adjustment.

The proposed implementation of both Dicer and Decor is currently undergoing public consultations at the Energy Regulatory Commission.

"Instead of pushing for the unbundling of charges and the complete privatization of the energy sector, the government should listen to the demands of the people and order the P30-billion refund immediately. In these times of crisis, especially with the impending US war on Iraq, every bit of peso counts," Tapang said.

Meralco has warned that the Supreme Court's decision has put questions on its continuing viability and that its implementation may cause an economic fallout.

In an earlier statement, Tapang scored Meralco for saying that the refund would lead to its bankruptcy.

Meralco has all the means to pay back immediately a total of P10.23 billion in refunds to its residential customers, he said.

He said Meralco could repay residential customers from its retained earnings, the accumulated interests on customers' deposits or the sale of its "extravagant" assets.

These assets, he said, were not directly involved in the distribution of electricity, among them Meralco's theater and shooting range, the Rockwell shopping mall, a helicopter, John F. Cotton Hospital and the Jolly Recreation Center.

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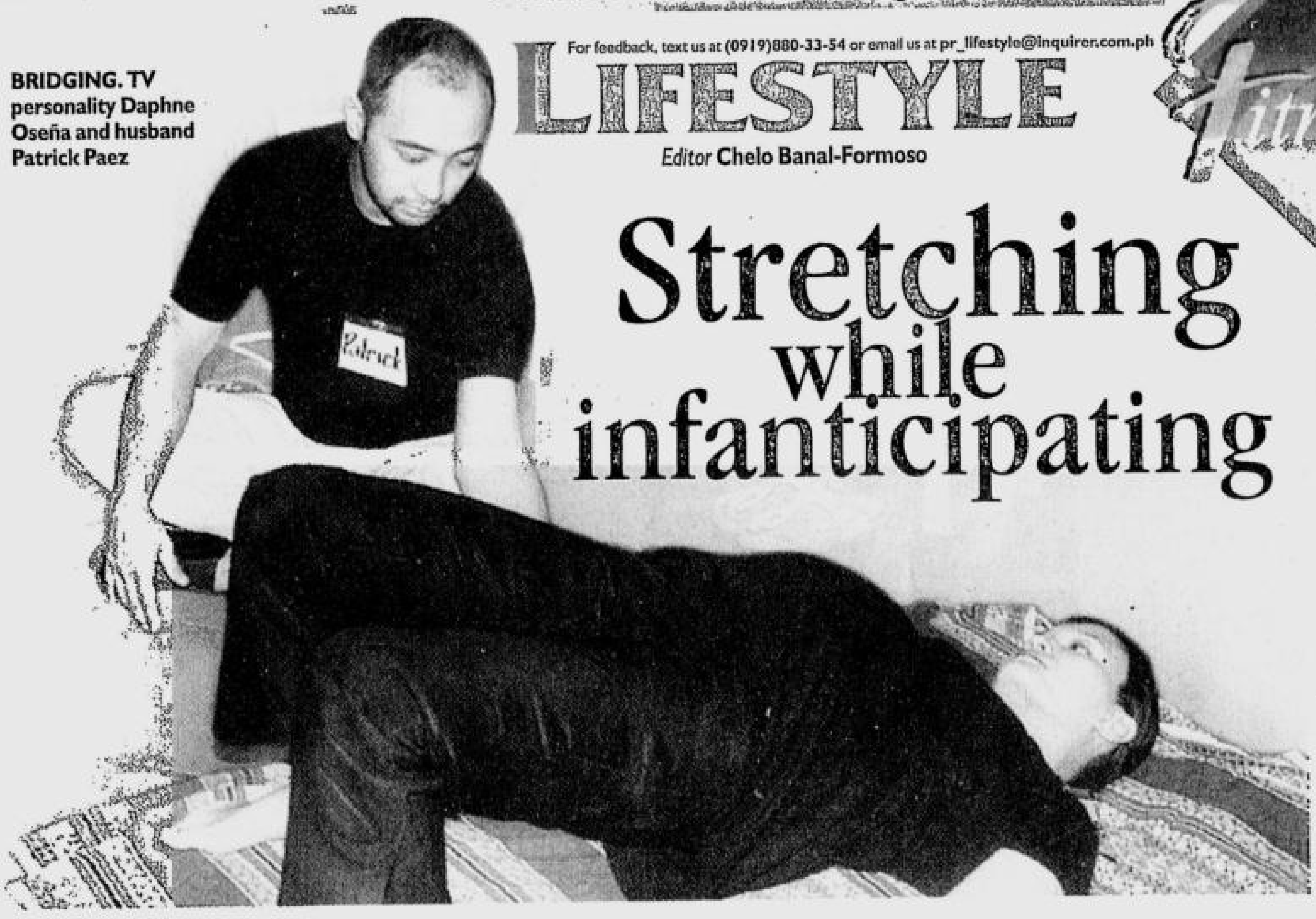
LIFESTYLE
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

fitness

Stretching while infanticipating



BRIDGING. TV personality Daphne Oseña and husband Patrick Paez

Pregnant women will do well to get in shape for the hard labor that brings the little bundle of joy

THE physical changes caused by pregnancy can make a woman lose her sense of balance and body control. So, exercise and stretching are recommended. Stretching tones and strengthens muscles, helps your body work more effectively and relieves you of certain aches and pains.

Before moms-to-be start on their exercises, however, they should consult a doctor. For women who are spotting or bleeding, have dilated cervix, premature contractions or leaking bag, no exercise can be done. Bed rest is usually recommended.

Pregnant women with heart problems, high blood pressure, diabetes or circulatory disorders also need special nutrition and exercise programs.

Choose the right program

According to Rome Kanapi, who offers classes on Lamaze and preparation for childbirth, pregnant women who haven't been doing any exercise can start off with stretching

STRETCHING/ C2

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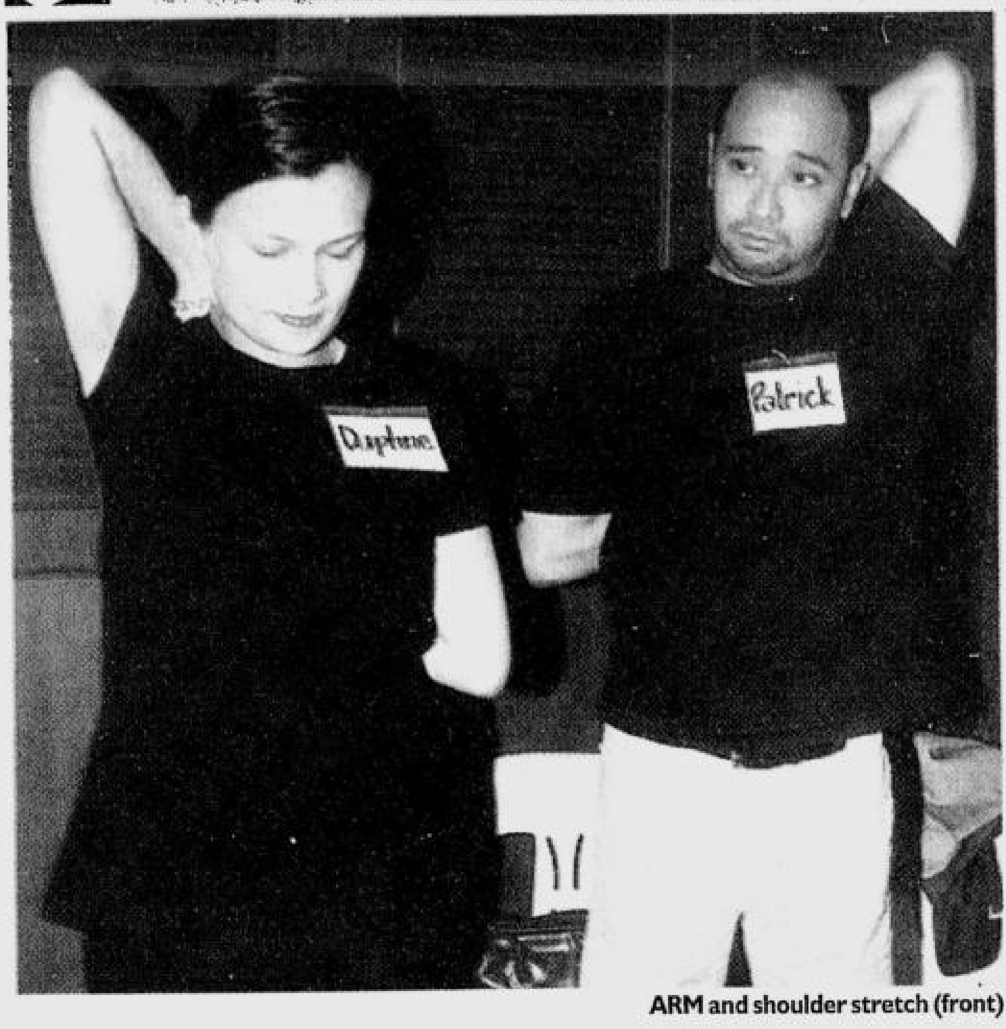
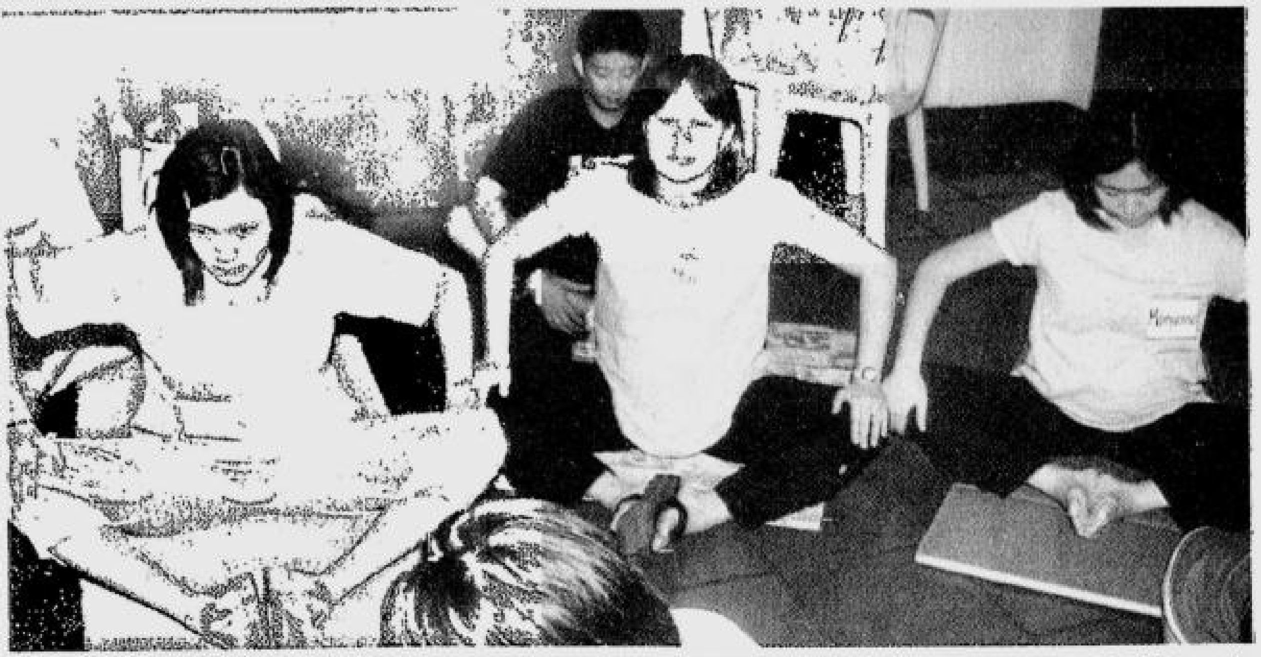
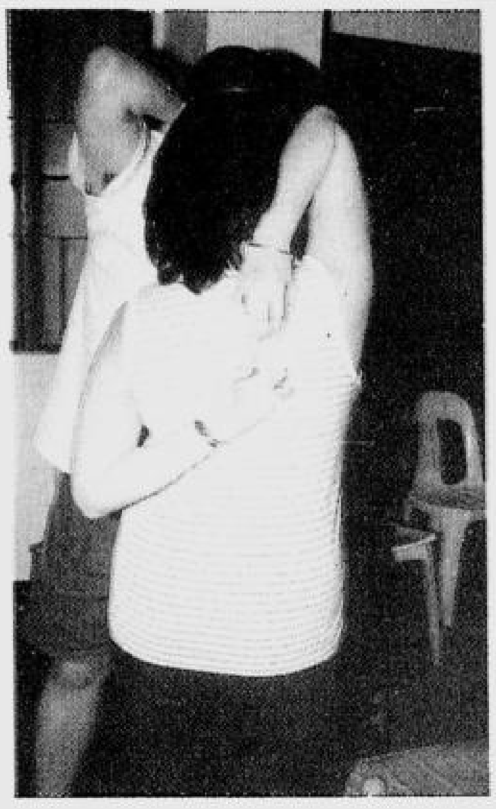


ARM and shoulder stretch (front)



GROIN stretch



ARM and shoulder stretch (back)

Stretching while infanticipating

From page C1

and toning. They can continue doing both until after delivery.

Infanticipating women who have always exercised you can continue doing so but need to consult with your aerobics or physical fitness instructor. Walking, swimming and stationary bicycling are the safest fitness activities for pregnant women, according to the experts.

Kanapi recommends the following gentle stretches and exercises that future moms can try before and after childbirth.

Neck stretch. You can try this standing or sitting on the floor with legs crossed. Look to the left, then look to the right. Another version is to look down and swing your head from left to right. (It is no longer advisable to do the neck roll.) Repeat eight times.

Neck stretches help relax tight neck muscles, decrease upper backache and improve posture.

Shoulder roll. While sitting or standing, roll your shoulders eight times. This exercise relaxes upper back muscles and stretches the muscles that support the breasts. By expanding the chest, it helps deep breathing and improves posture.

Arm and shoulder stretch. Stretch left arm to the ceiling. Bend left arm at elbow, dropping down hand to your back. Swing right arm and grasp left hand behind back. Hold this position for 20 seconds. Now do the same with your right arm. Stretch within your limits.

Arm stretches relieve upper backache and increase lung capacity. They will also stretch the less flexible arm.

Groin stretch. Sit on the floor and put the soles of your feet together. Press your knees down to stretch the groin then release. Do eight times. This exercise stretches your groin muscles to prepare them for delivery.

Bridging. Lie on your back with knees bent and feet a little bit apart. Slowly lift buttocks, waist and middle back. Then lower your middle back, waist and buttocks. Bridging stretches your abdominal and back muscles.

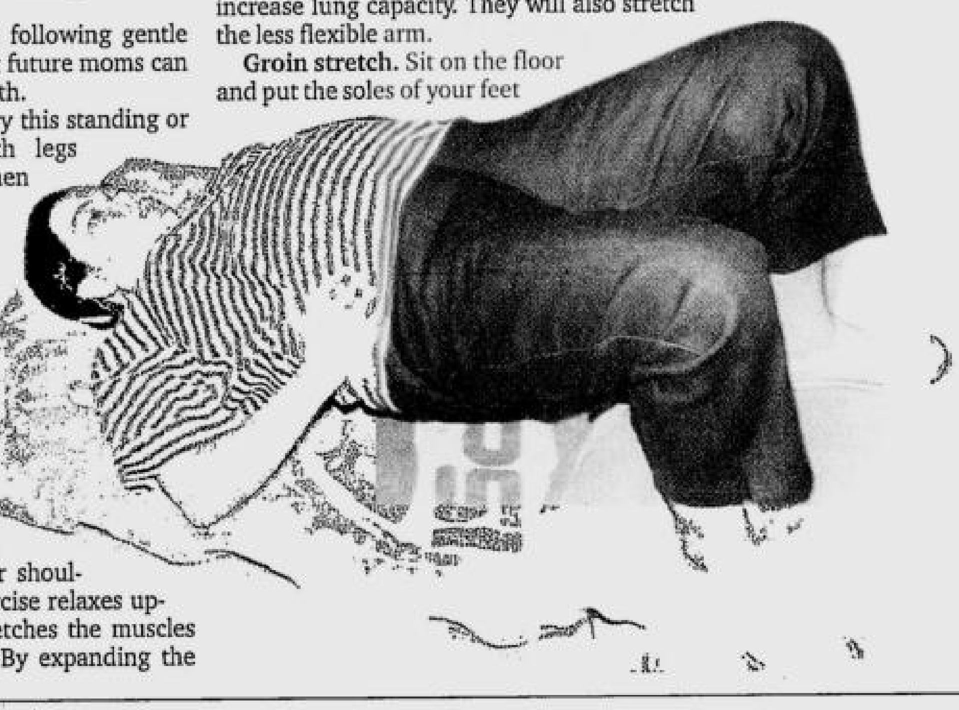
Pelvic tilt or belly dancing. Stand with feet apart. Bend your knees slightly and roll your hips to the right, back, left and front, all in a circular motion. This relieves lower back pains.

Kegel exercise. In any position, tighten the pelvic floor muscles or your vaginal muscles slowly to the count of five. Then slowly release to the count of five. Do the exercise 10-15 times a day.

Kegel exercises strengthen the pelvic floor muscles that support the uterus. They help prevent two common problems before and after birth: hemorrhoids and leakage of urine.

Pre-childbirth or Lamaze classes are given by Rome Kanapi at Santuario de San Antonio in Makati and the Ateneo de Manila University in Loyola Heights, QC. Call 436-1757 or (0917) 541-5114.

BRIDGING



PHOTOS BY MANDY NAVASERO

Pleasing other people, pleasing one's self

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

THE WAY we manage our emotions can greatly affect our bodies. One such emotional pattern is called pleasing.

It is said that the desire to please others can distract you from what you truly feel. While there is certainly nothing wrong with doing acts of kindness and service, the obsessive impulse to please is generated by fear of loss. It is based on one's fear of losing the love of another and the need for approval, admiration and caring.

For example, when somebody you care for shows displeasure, it makes you worry a lot, which is an extremely painful experience. Consequently, the more you fail to please the person, the more you get worried. And the more intense the pain, the greater the need to please. And even if you hide your pain from others, you cannot hide it from yourself.

The need to please is based on authority issues. The one who gets angry pursues power overtly, the one who pleases does things covertly. Like the oppressor and the oppressed, both types attract each other for some strange reason.

Understanding one's emotions is a sacred task because it is a crucial step toward self-enlightenment. One who excessively pleases places his/her self worth into the hands of other people and depends completely upon their judgment while doing his/her best to influence their judgment.

Understanding one's emotions is a crucial step toward self-enlightenment

Different Sides of the Same Dynamic

Need to Please	Resentment/Anger
[illegible]	
Submissive	Dominating
Worries about how she/he appears to others	Doesn't care about others
Thinks fearful possibilities	Feels righteous
Has no opinion	Opinionated
Strives for approval	Looks for signs of rejections
Manipulates through doing for others	Manipulates through anger
Buried resentment	Overt resentment
Compulsion to care	Pushes others away
Focused on others	Separated from others
Fear of Loss	Rebels against circumstances

How they are the Same

Feels unworthy	Feels unworthy
Body tense	Body tense
Authority issues intention to control	Authority issues intention to control
Pursues external power	Pursues external power
Covertly	Overtly
Frightened	Frightened
The Goals of Each	
Avioding painful, shameful emotions	Avioding painful, shameful emotions

Pleasing test

If the pleasing urge seizes you, stop. Allow yourself to feel what is driving you to do it, try to go beneath the urge. Ask yourself why? Am I doing this out of love or fear?

Message

You know others cannot appreciate you because they do not know who you are and you do not know who you are. You define yourself in terms of what others expect from you. And your self-gratification is knowing you'll get what you want by manipulating others. In the end, the one manipulated by your ways is yourself.

You cannot win. Your seemingly pleasing ways protect you from your experience of unworthiness and the terror that accompanies it. It is a technique to isolate you from your fear of losing love, security, comfort, and status.

It's never too late though. To counter this negative behavioral pattern, why not learn a positive one—pleasing yourself! Here is a quick remedy, guaranteed to give you a good start.

Vital force

Your body speaks a language you must learn to understand. People who slouch, hunch their backs and stoop their shoulders reflect one thing—lack of self-esteem or self-confidence. Begin rebuilding your inner reserves by correcting your posture.

Stand with your back against a wall. Hold that pose for five minutes. Close your eyes and feel your energy running up your spine. Breathe slowly. Smile. Then say, "I recognize my vital force." Beginning today, start pleasing yourself.

Next week, a "pleasing yourself" checklist of what to do and where to go.

Love and light!

Source: Gary Zukav's "The Heart of the Soul

GOLD'S Gym honorary members onstage

Gym honors Filipino athletes

AS one of the newest and hippest gyms in the country, Gold's Gym is briskly gaining popularity among health and fitness trendsetters after its high-profile launch a few months ago. Given its sophisticated facilities, cutting-edge program and hip crowd, it is now the hottest convergence point of celebrities, urban professionals, successful athletes, expats and the trendiest health buffs.

Gold's Gym recently threw a fabulous bash that packed the aerobics room with members, partygoers, guests, sportspersons and revelers, all in the name of thrill and fun.

Highlighting the activity was the awarding of honorary memberships to the county's outstanding and celebrated athletes who excelled in the previous East Asian Games in Busan, Korea. Led by bowling legend Paeng Nepomuceno, medalists who made the Philippines proud by emerging victorious in the sporting arena were given recognition. This was likewise met with a high-spirited ovation by the guests.

Redefining the concept of art in motion, the Whiplash Dancers wove a fantastic choreography of kicks, spins and maneuvers that added to the adrenalin-pumped excitement.

The highly successful gig solidifies Gold's Gym reputation as the world's biggest chain of health clubs. As the gym continues its dedication in providing its members the best health and fitness regimen available, it remains faithful to its catchy mantra: "You could be somebody."

A MEMBER shows off his sculpted bod.

New Age ideas alarm the Catholic Church

I THOUGHT the issue regarding New Age has long been dead in the Philippines. No one even talks about it anymore.

It became popular in the United States in the late 1960s, came to the Philippines in the '70s, was moribund in the '80s and gradually died in the '90s. The average Filipino doesn't even know what it is, nor does he care to.

So it came as a big surprise to me that the Catholic Church, through the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), was again beating the long-dead horse.

In a press release that came out in the major dailies on Feb. 10, the bishops "expressed alarm over the prevalence of New Age ideas and practices," which in their view are "incompatible with the teachings of Christianity."

What are these so-called New Age ideas that have alarmed the Church? Says the CBCP Primer: "These New Age ideas include palm reading, fortune telling, horoscopes, karma, divination of environment, reincarnation, astrology, spiritism, yoga and the belief that God is a cosmic being."

According to CBCP spokesman, Msgr. Hernando Coronel, "New Age Movement (NAM) is a combination of different religious beliefs such as Taoism, Hinduism and Buddhism, Gnosticism and other non-Christian philosophies." Coronel, however, clarified, "the church is not against these religions but was merely explaining the parts of the NAM beliefs that were taken from them."

I can't get the logic behind that statement. If they are not against these non-Christian religions, why are they against a combination of them?

What was more surprising to me was that in one major newspaper (not the INQUIRER), the CBCP had "identified Jaime Licauco and Alex Orbito as among those propagating the New Age belief on occult practices."

Why me?

I almost choked laughing when I read that! But I wish to thank CBCP for giving me more importance than I deserve. Frankly, I do not know what the bishops are talking about. I do not think that they did a very thorough investigation or analysis of the things they have attributed to me and to the New Age.

In the first place, I have never engaged in nor encouraged people to indulge in any occult practices such as witchcraft, sorcery or casting spells.

What I have really been doing through all these years is conducting systematic and rational investigation and documentation of paranormal and psychic phenomena in the Philippines. I have also been teaching people how to develop the latent potentials of their inner mind or faculties. These can hardly be called "occult practices."

In fact, there are big universities abroad, such as Stanford, Princeton, Duke University and John F. Kennedy in the US and the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands, that have been studying such phenomena. And these are headed by first-rate scientists with Ph.D's in Physics and Psychology. I was in touch with some of these scientists during the early stages of my research. I have met such top research scientists as physicist Russell Targ of Stanford Research Institute (now with Lockheed Corp.), brain scientist Dr. Karl Pribram of Stanford University, parapsychologist Dr. Stanley Krippner of Saybrook Institute, and Egyptologist and Ufologist Dr. James J. Hurtak of the Academy of Future Science. They are all familiar with my research work in the Philippines.

I have no time or inclination for occult practices. The problem is that most people (and that now includes the CBCP) cannot distinguish between scientific research into paranormal phenomena and the practice of them. I am most definitely not a practitioner. In fact, I have never even claimed to be a psychic. And I have not made any single public prediction. As I have always said, "Don't ask me for one because all my predictions are wrong!"

I don't really know why I even merit to be included in the list of the so-called New Age movement, much less be described as "the most widely known New Age personality in the country." Gee, I don't even meditate regularly, which I should be doing. So how did I ever become a propagator of certain beliefs that I don't even practice?

Not a movement

I don't even know what the CBCP means by the term "New Age." If it is a movement, who is its leader? Where is it based? How many people are members of such a movement? What is its essential doctrine or philoso-

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

phy? Who started it in the first place?

Actually, the so-called New Age Movement is not a movement at all. It is so amorphous a concept that it is difficult to pinpoint what is and what is not New Age. If one practices yoga, consults an astrologer or a feng shui specialist, or meditates in a lotus position, does that make him or her a New Age practitioner?

And for Christ's sake, why isn't the name of Fr. Jaime Bulatao, a Jesuit priest who talks to *dwendes* and hypnotizes people, in the list of New Age practitioners? And for that matter, why isn't the name of another good Jesuit, Fr. Vitaliano Gorospe, who regularly went up to Mt. Banahaw to meditate and pray and even brought his theology students to be introduced to the different New Age cults there, in the list? Because they are priests?

As to my books, they are all products of impartial and meticulous research into various phenomena in the Philippines. They have nothing to do at all with religious beliefs; neither are they against Christianity. In fact, two of my books, "The Psychic World and You" and "Beyond Ordinary Reality" (Rev. Ed.) were published by a Catholic school, the De La Salle University, after a two-year evaluation and review by a panel which included at least one Catholic theologian before they were approved for publication.

Several Catholic priests and nuns and at least one protestant minister who has a Doctor of Divinity degree have attended my seminars and found the contents to be not incompatible with Christ's teachings.

If they only made a little research, the CBCP would have discovered what Mexican Archibischop Norberto Rivera Carrera, in his pastoral letter two years ago, correctly pointed out, that the "New Age is not a sect or religion. It is not a single organization, and it does not follow unanimous and universal guidelines. It is not a science or a philosophy."

Then what is it? To me it is not even a belief, but merely a point of view.

People who are in the so-called New Age movement do not even agree on what it is, nor how to define it. So, how can anybody even succeed in logically putting all those disparate groups or people under one label? And then say that such New Age beliefs (which cannot be defined or articulated) are against Church teachings? How can such an amorphous and extremely vague concept be against anything at all?

Sexual abuses of priests

If I may give the CBCP a bit of advice, it will be more relevant and beneficial if they will devote their time and effort investigating the sexual abuses of Catholic priests and even bishops against women and minors, rather than raking up non-issues against a non-existent movement.

When I raised this issue in a television interview, Msgr. Coronel said, "We have our weaknesses, but that's beside the point. What we are talking about here is the erosion of the faith and about Christian doctrine."

I beg to disagree. What will erode the faith of the people in the Catholic Church faster is to see their priests and bishops sexually harassing and even raping women parishioners and innocent children who will never grow up in a normal way because of their devilish deeds.

This matter has something to do with doctrine, also because celibacy and chastity are established doctrines of the Catholic Church that have often been violated by priests since the time of Father Damaso in Rizal's novel.

Clerical sexual abuse destroys faith in the Church much more than someone consulting an astrologer or practicing yoga. It would therefore be a thousand times more relevant if the CBCP would issue a primer warning women and minors against predatory priests and bishops than against so-called New Age belief.

Psychic research

As a parting word, it may interest the CBCP and the public to know that even the present head of the Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II, believes in psychic research and has said so himself. After the conference on Alternative Healing held in Milan, Italy, in 1988, where I was invited as one of several international speakers, the organizer invited us to meet the Pope in Rome.

> Fortune telling, astrology, karma and yoga are said to be incompatible with Christian teachings

During an audience at the Vatican, the Pope said: "I would like to welcome here those who conduct psychotronics research (the term used for psychic research in Italy) for they are also doing their part to help humanity."

During my special audience with the Pope, I gave His Holiness a copy of the German edition of my book, "The Truth Behind Faith Healing in the Philippines." His face lighted up when I mentioned I came from the Philippines. When I told him the book I'm giving him was about the faith healers of the Philippines, the Pope said, "Faith is what we need most in the world today." The book is now in the Vatican library.

Send letters to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City or e-mail jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit http://j.licauco.tripod.com. Listen to DZMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.

Cranberry's health benefits

CRANBERRY is full of natural goodness that the whole family can enjoy.

The fruit of the cranberry is the part of the plant most often used in therapeutic practice. In the fall, the low growing shrub produces bright red, broadly oval berries similar to black currants but twice the size. The waxy skins enclose a fibrous, acidic and astringent pulp with numerous seeds, which is not entirely palatable when eaten raw. Traditional remedies generally used the dried of fresh fruit, but most modern recipes are based on the juice. The pulp and seeds of the berries are a rich source of pectin, which, when mixed with a sweetener and the natural acid of the fruit, forms a jelly.

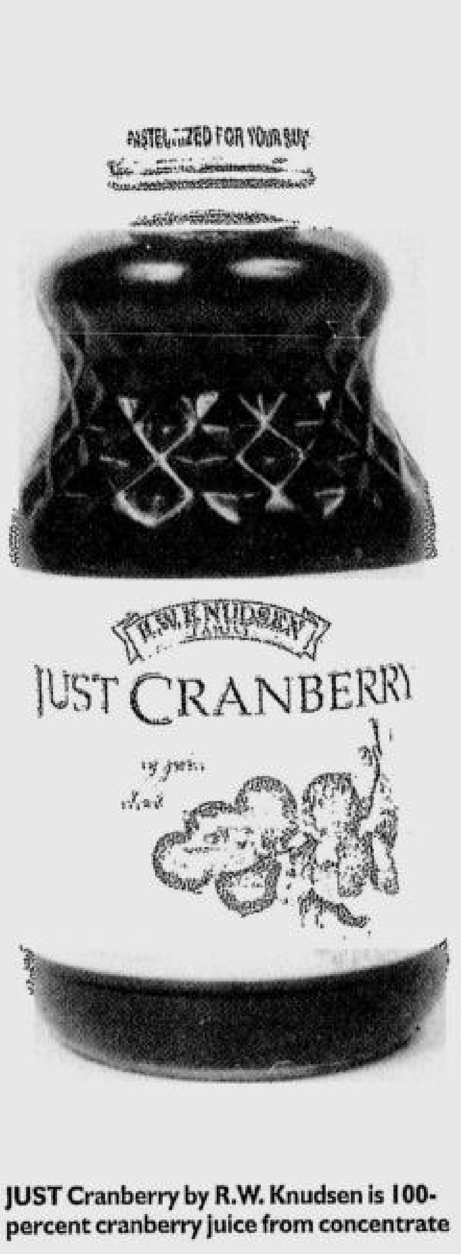
Fruits that are gathered for juices or sauces are harvested "wet," while berries destined to be sold whole, either fresh or dried, are harvested "dry."

Cranberries are astringent, antiseptic and tonic. They have a high nutritional value and contain pectin, sugars, tannins (arbutin), flavonoids (anthocyanin pigments), carotene and vitamins and minerals. Most important is the antiscobutic Vitamin C, which is present in large quantities, and also Vitamins A and B, riboflavin, and niacin. Added to the minerals—sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, copper, sulfur, iron and iodine—is a unique blend of organic acids: quinic, malic and citric acid. Quinic acid is, at present, considered to be the most important of the three.

It is the presence of tannins, however, that makes the use of cranberry so effective in the treatment of bladder infections. Tannins also act as strong antimicrobials and help to "dry" loose bowels. They are complex mixtures of aromatic acids that have astringent and antiseptic properties. They cause proteins to clump together in mucous membranes. This makes them more rigid and deprives bacteria of nutrition, aiding the swift healing of wounds, reducing sensitivity and pain, and forming a protective crust. Tannins also help to dry out tissue, which prevents further infection.

Cranberry juice that has to be used for therapeutic purposes should contain at least 27-percent of pure cranberry juice. Some cranberry juices are mixed with other fruit juices to make them more palatable. They also often have water and sugar added to them. The level of sugar in cranberry juices concerns doctors, because it can exacerbate some medical conditions.

If you wish to avoid the added sugar, you can buy untreated, dried cranberries from herbalists and health food stores. They are naturally sweet and pleasantly sharp. Published by Healthy Options with stores located at the following: 1/L Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City; Rustan's Supermarket, Makati City; 2/L Festival Supermall, Filinvest, Alabang; ground level of Ayala Center, Cebu City; LG/F SM City North Edsa; 2/L SM City Manila; Greenbelt, Ayala Center, Makati City; and at the newly opened branch on 2/L SM Megamall B, Edsa, Mandaluyong City; SM City, Pampanga; and at SM City Bicutan.



JUST Cranberry by R.W. Knudsen is 100-percent cranberry juice from concentrate

Take Charge Doc!
Nicky S. Montoya, M.D.
MEDICard

Looking to learn more about your benefits under your MEDICard coverage? Do you want to be clear on the procedures, which allow you to avail of MEDICard's services? Get your information straight from MEDICard's Medical Director, DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

A friend of mine who was hospitalized under MEDICard did not incur excess and incremental charges when he upgraded his room accommodation when none within his plan of enrollment was available. A week ago, my son was confined and met the similar circumstance, this time however, in a different hospital. I was charged for the room upgrade, both for excess and incremental cost. Why is this so? Do your room upgrade policies differ between hospitals?

MEDICard room upgrade policies are the same in all hospitals: ***Occupying a room level higher than what a member's plan allows will incur excess and incremental charges which are for the patient's personal account.*** In your friend's situation, it is likely that he is enrolled under a corporate program where they have the "add-on" benefit which entitles members to occupy the next higher room level in cases of non-availability of their room of enrollment. This room and board upgrade is usually allowed only during the first 24 or 48 hours, depending on the provision of their healthcare agreement (benefit is limited to large group and corporate accounts only). Your HMO program however likely does not include this benefit, that is why you were billed for incremental and excess charges.

Meet your MEDICard Team

A holistic approach in the treatment of patients is the practice of **Dr. Emerenciana C. Collado**, our accredited specialist at the Philippine Heart Center for Asia located at East Avenue, Quezon City. Doc Emmy has more than 16 years of clinical practice. She is a Pediatric specialist who subspecializes in Pediatric Cardiology and Echocardiography. Dr. Collado is a board member of the Philippine Society of Pediatric Cardiologists and a Fellow of the Philippine Pediatric Society. Outside of her clinical practice, she is a loving mother to her three children Emmanuel, Mary Ruth and Simon Anthony. Members may visit Dr. Collado for consultations at Room 404, from Mondays to Saturdays, 10 AM untill in the afternoon.

The center of all MEDICard availments at the Specialist Group Hospital and Trauma Center in Tapulac District in Dagupan City is **Dr. Carlito V. Arenas**, the MEDICard Medical Coordinator for the hospital. Dr. Carl is a Far Eastern University Doctor of Medicine graduate who specializes in General Surgery, subspecializing in Traumatology. He has with him more than 22 years of clinical experience and has been a MEDICard accredited service provider since 1997. Doc Carl also has postgraduate trainings in Post Operative and Intensive Care, Endoscopy, Traumatologic Hip Joint Prosthesis and Evaluation and Treatment of Breast Cancer in various hospitals in West Germany. For all your medical needs at the Specialist Group Hospital and Trauma Center, look for Dr. Carl Arenas.

For dental healthcare services, members may visit **Dr. Caroline Santos-Ruiz.** Doc Caroline who has been in the practice of her profession since 1994 is a Dental Medicine graduate of Centro Escolar University. She has been our accredited dentist for more than three years now. Dr Ruiz spends most of her free time with her family, but makes it a point to find time for herself enjoying her hobbies, working out at the gym and cooking. You may see her for consultations at the Santos Dental Clinic, UG-9 Cityland Shaw Tower, St. Francis St. cor. Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City. Clinic hours are from Mondays to Saturdays, 10 AM to 12 noon and from 1 PM to 6 in the evening.

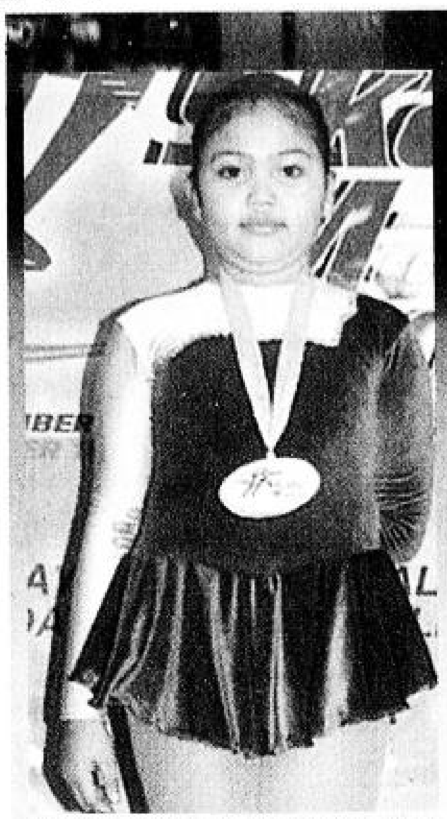
We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com. For feedback on availment of our services, e-mail us at feedback@medicardphils.com.

For inquiries on individual or family membership, dial 818-2161. For group or corporate membership, dial 810-1503 or 817-4985 and look for a membership consultant. For Cebu Sales Office call (032) 253-5031; For Davao Sales Office call (082) 224-6931/305-3386.

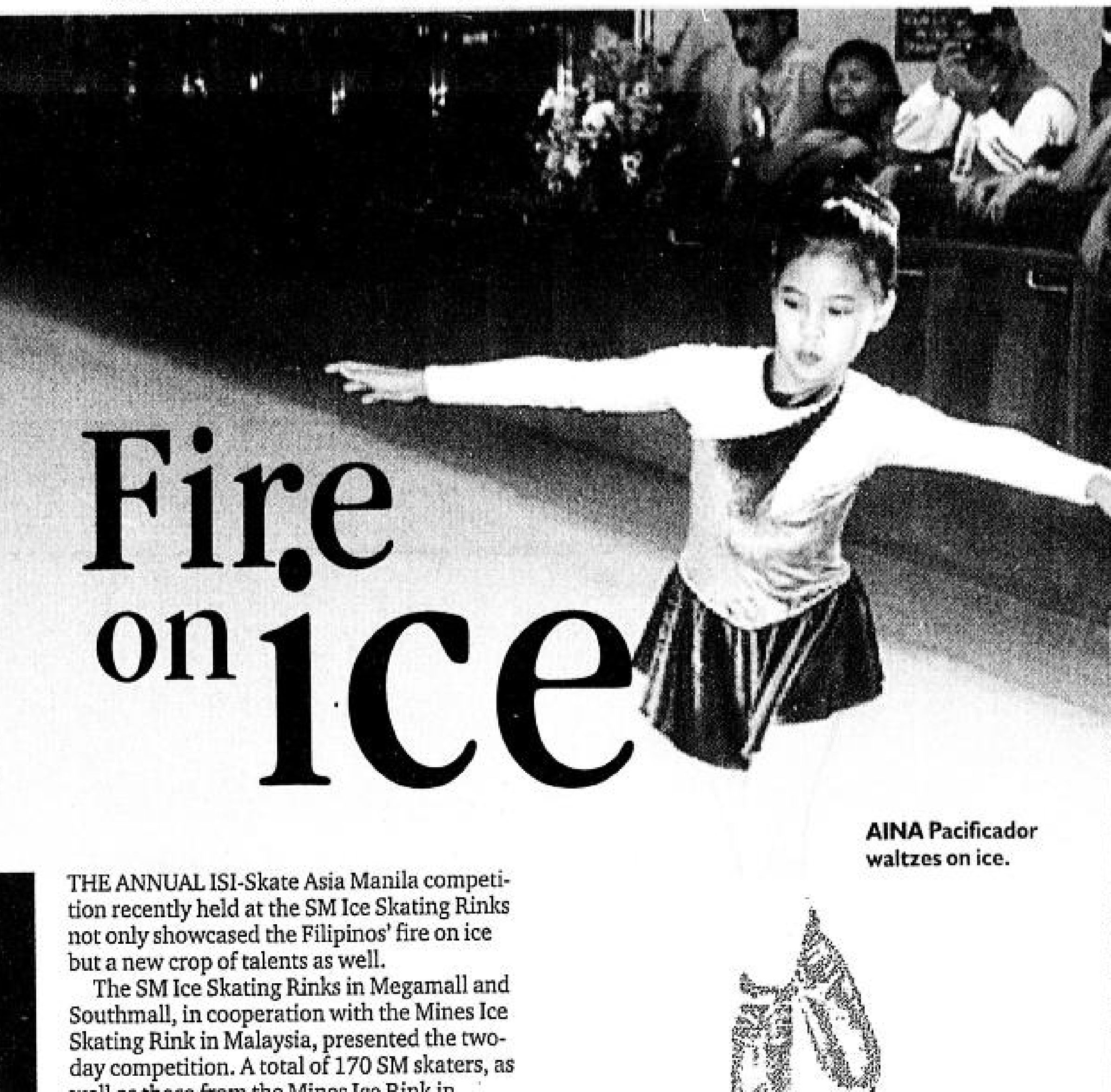
TEXT MEDICard for your queries: 0917-7518365 (Globe) or 0919-2476240 (Smart). Please don't forget to include your complete name and landline number where MEDICard could reach you. Log on to www.medicardphils.com.

MEDICard is the first and only HMO in the Philippines and the whole Asian region to be ISO 9002 certified.

ISO 9002

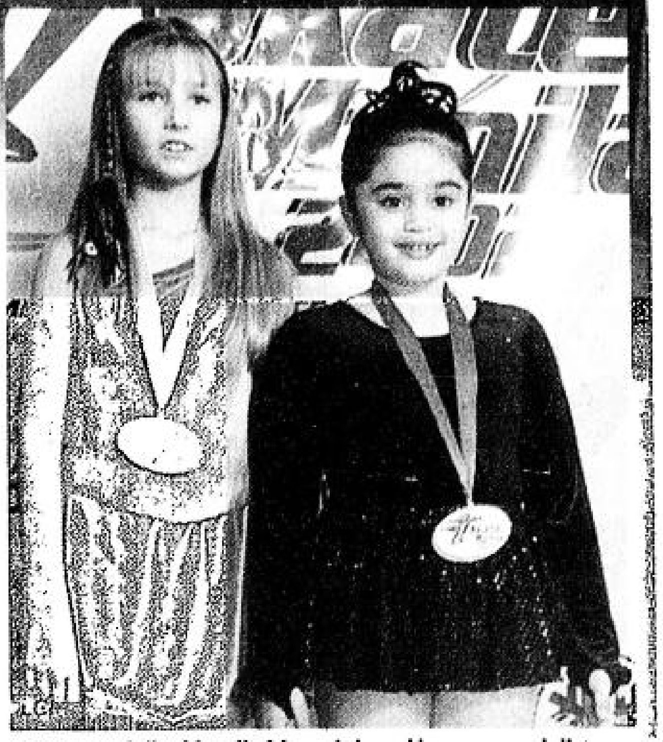


GOLD medalist Darlene Anne Farillas



Fire on ice

AINA Pacificador waltzes on ice.



GOLD medalist Natalie Morosiuk and bronze medalist Denz Jovelle Salcines

VERONIKA Vrtelova from Czechoslovakia and most artistic skater Francesca Laureano after their Couple Tech 8 performance

THE ANNUAL ISI-Skate Asia Manila competition recently held at the SM Ice Skating Rinks not only showcased the Filipinos' fire on ice but a new crop of talents as well.

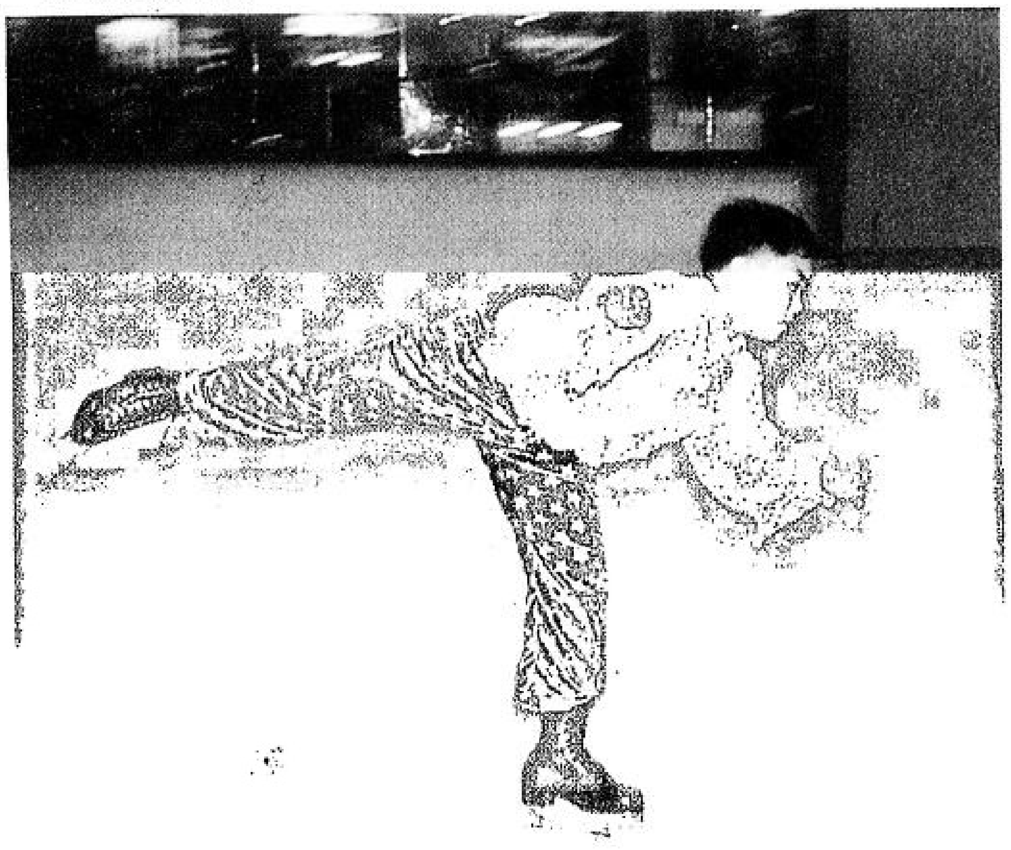
The SM Ice Skating Rinks in Megamall and Southmall, in cooperation with the Mines Ice Skating Rink in Malaysia, presented the two-day competition. A total of 170 SM skaters, as well as those from the Mines Ice Rink in Malaysia, participated.

The SM Megamall team topped the competition with a total medal count of 144 gold, 54 silver and 49 bronze medals. Last year's team, SM Southmall, was the runner-up with 128 gold, 31 silver and 31 bronze medals.

There was also a lot of group spirits in the Team Compulsories performances. These included the SM Southmall Babes in their Brazilian Dance medley; the Ice Angels in their Ketchup Song disco number; D'Universal Charrot Chuk-Chak Chenelyn team in their Beauty Pageant tableaux; and the Elite Blades, who awed the audiences with their jump and spin maneuvers.

MOST PROMISING SKATERS. Cara Naomi Damian and Franchette Beatrix Ordena

THE SOUTHMALL Ice Babes in their Brazilian-inspired costume: Jessica Cabili, Lara Gilua, Martha Segundo, Judie Anne Contreras, Denise Alejandro and Masako Fukui



SKATER Bien Patrick Bergonia shows his fire on ice. He brought home a total of six gold medals.

SM Ice Skating Rinks' coaches Eric Navalta (Megamall) and Al Mariñas (Southmall) with Mines Ice Rink's coach Ogie Bentiez (Malaysia) receive their team's trophies during the Skate Manila competition. With them are SM's Ric Camaligan and Rogie Santos.

Who says there's no ice hockey in the tropics?

FOR THE PAST few months, a group of feisty kids have been literally playing it cool with ice hockey games at the SM Southmall Ice Skating Rink.

Aged 4 to 12, they come to the rink with complete ice hockey gear—skates, helmets, hockey sticks—for their lessons every Saturday. They are so into the sport, in fact, that they not only look like real pros on ice, they also have formed a group of their own, the Tigers Club.

Derek Cadiz, who acts as the club's president, makes sure that the boys and, yes, girls, learn ice hockey basics during their training. This includes practicing their skating, as well as learning how to fall, handle sticks and skate with the pack.

Ice hockey, after all, is said to be the fastest sport on ice, and to be an effective skater, one needs a combination of good technique and physical strength. And as the kids have shown the coaches and their parents, who give them their all-out support each time, it's never too early to learn the sport.

Nicholas Oliversen, 6, says he likes playing ice hockey because his father was a good hockey player during his younger days. The Oliversens are Norwegians who lived in South Africa for sometime, and Nicholas, who also likes swimming, soccer, and baseball, seems to be closely following his father's footsteps. Now that the family is based in the Philippines, father and son spend a lot of time at the SM Southmall rink.

Patrick Roy Enriquez's father is likewise good in the sport, and the 6-year-old also "wants to be like him." With a lot of encouragement from dad, this student at St. Joseph's Academy tackles the sport like a pro—practicing frequently, sleeping early and disciplining oneself.

Practice likewise makes perfect for Ralph Manlangit, 7, a student at the Southville International School who says he finds the sport "challenging and interesting."

The kids draw a lot of inspiration from their ice hockey idols. Paulo Martin Concepcion, 9, dreams of playing like Dave Andrechuk and Eric Lindros one day, and realizes that to achieve this, he needs a lot of practice and training.

THE YOUNG members of the Tigers Club prove that you can never be too young to be in the rink.

Kyle Yves Santos, on the other hand, says Yzerman and Paul Kariya are her idols as "they are good athletes." She adds that she needs "more discipline and determination to be a good hockey player."

Like Kyle, Cleo Verna Rica Vidano is one of the girls on the team. This St. Paul's College student puts a lot into her hockey lessons and games, realizing that "one has to be fast a disciplined to be a good ice hockey player."

Tigers team goalie Mathieu Miller enjoys the sport as it is "a great stress reliever." He says, "When I'm not holding my drum sticks and playing my drums at home, I'm holding my hockey sticks and playing ice hockey."

Victor Joshua Vidano, on the other hand, enthuses that he "enjoys the training. We have good coaches and I learn new things every practice."

More than anything else, ice hockey is a lot of fun. Jose Miguel Torres, who's in third grade at La Salle Zobel, says he enjoys "meeting a lot of kids who play the sport in the rink." Marvin Rogunik, meanwhile, considers ice hockey "a cool sport," and being on the team is one way he can learn a lot and build up his confidence.

Joshua Santos, 4, is the youngest among the Tigers, but his heart is clearly into the sport. He loves to watch NHL games with his dad on cable, and dreams of one day joining the team so he can play hockey all the time.

The Tigers Club kids train every Saturday from 8-10 a.m. at the SM Southmall Ice Skating Rink, under the team president Derek Cadiz and coach Ashley Pajarillo.

Why are people getting fatter?

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

THE WORLD Health Organization reported last year that more than one billion people worldwide are overweight (300 million of them are obese and 22 million are children under the age of five). No wonder health professionals are concerned. Consider the following troubling statistics from the American Obesity Association Conference held in September.

In China, 12 percent of the men and 16 percent of the women are obese; in Malaysia, 3 out of 10 men are obese and in the Philippines, it's 1 in 10.

In Mexico, more than half the population is overweight and 23 percent are obese. In Egypt, 35 percent are obese; in Saudi Arabia, 16 percent of the men and 24 percent of the women are overweight.

Even Africa, which is usually associated with famine and starvation, is not spared. Obesity has caught up with the urban areas, too.

It looks like getting fat is a contagious disease that is being spread by a virus or bacteria. Well, in a sense, it is a disease because being overweight and obese is associated with so many life-threatening conditions like diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and certain cancers. Health professionals have good reasons to be worried since they know it will take quite an effort to stop the escalating figures.

The reason for this obesity epidemic is not a simple one that can be traced to a single source. Here are several theories to explain why whole populations are gaining weight.

Urbanization leads to change in diet and exercise habits.

In rural areas, most of the livelihood opportunities involve being physically active. Rural folk eat mostly home-grown food. There are no supermarkets or restaurants to buy from. Lifestyles change when the area becomes urbanized. Factories and offices offer jobs that no longer require much physical movement. Groceries soon set up shop because the local people can now afford to buy their products. Fast food chains move into town. The urbanization effect on a rural lifestyle means increased incomes but it also means increased waistlines.

'Thrifty gene' theory

It is believed that many people have "thrifty" genes that cause them to store calories easily and burn calories at a slower rate. The scientists who espouse this theory explain that these thrifty genes were helpful when people lived in an environment that involved doing hard physical labor and eating unprocessed food. But the thrifty genes have become a health hazard because the world has changed and people now have access to highly processed calorie-rich foods and live a sedentary lifestyle.

> The food industry creates new markets for products that are wants and not needs for our bodies

The Pima Indians of Arizona and Mexico are often used as an example of this theory because they are genetically similar but live in different environments. The Arizona Pima Indians live a typical American life and the result is 75 percent of them are obese by the time they are in their 20s. Their Mexican cousins live in a world similar to their ancestors where the men average 40 hours a week of hard physical work and the women, 90 hours a week of backbreaking household chores. Their diet consist of tortillas, vegetables and little meat. Fat only makes 23 percent of their daily diet. Because of their lifestyle, they weigh 50 pounds less than their American relatives.

Fast-food culture

Fast food is now available in malls, supermarkets, gas stations, airports and schools. Competing chains are located in regular intervals through every major city. This was not the situation 20 years ago. The fast food trend has been called the Americanization of the world's eating habits.

Fast food restaurants are necessary for a highly mobile society that needs cheap, clean and accessible food. Unfortunately, most of the food being served is high in fat, refined flour and sugar. A classic example is the combo of burger, fries and soft drink.

Addicting as heroin

Some scientists believe that the high sugar and fat contents of fast food and snack food may be as addicting as heroin. Right now, there is no proof of this in humans but it has been proven in rats. A Princeton University study found that rats eating a diet composed of 25 percent sugar had withdrawal symptoms like chattering teeth and the "shakes," which are similar to symptoms experienced by people who stop taking nicotine or heroin.

Meanwhile, a University of Wisconsin study found that rats fed with sweet, salty and fatty food developed permanent brain changes similar to heroin addicts. The rats became so addicted that they ate six times more fat than they normally would.

I wonder what health officials are going to do if it can be proven in the future that humans can become addicted to food high in fat and sugar? It will surely be an explosive political and economic dilemma because an astronomic amount of money is at stake in the sale of fast food and junk food.

'Supersize' theory

More restaurants are offering super-sized portions because it is popular with consumers who believe they are getting more value for their money since a super-sized version of the regular-sized order can be had for just a slight increase in price. If the super-sized order is shared among friends or family members, money and calories are saved. However, many people end up finishing the whole thing by themselves. In experiments conducted by consumer psychologist Brian Wansink, participants ate considerably more when they were given extra large portions. People don't realize just how many more calories they are eating. A normal-sized order of a burger, fries and a 12-ounce softdrink has about 590 calories. A super-sized version of that same order has approximately 1,550 calories.

Media pressure

You can run but you cannot hide from food ads. They are everywhere. You see them on TV and you hear them on radio. They are in newspapers and magazines, and on billboards. As obesity expert Theodore Vanitallie of Columbia University said in a United States News and World Report, "Man used to hunt for his food. Now food hunts man."

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

The food industry and their ad agencies are creating new markets for food products that are "wants" and not "needs" for our bodies. Fruits and vegetables are things our bodies need to be healthy. Potato chips and doughnuts are things our tongues want but our bodies can do very well without. In the US, the company that makes a popular snack called Twinkie has gone one step further to boost sales by offering a fried version. One nutritionist called it the height of decadence since a fried Twinkie has 160 percent more calories than the original version.

Food pyramid theory

The anti-carb diet gurus blame the US government's food pyramid for the increase in obesity. They say that the food pyramid's emphasis on eating more carbohydrates and less fat led people to believe that they could eat as many carbohydrates as they wanted because they are fat-free.

The creators of the food pyramid recommended eating whole grains, fruits, and vegetables as sources of carbohydrates. Unfortunately, the public did not read the fine print and interpreted this to mean unlimited servings of refined carbohydrates like white bread, bagels, pasta, etc.

Matters became worse when the food industry created thousands of non-fat and low-fat products that contained almost as many calories as the original versions due to the high sugar and refined flour content. Dr. Barbara Rolls of Penn State proved in experiments that people will eat more when they are told that the food is low in fat because they think they are saving calories.

Computer and TV generation

The cell phone, Internet, computer games, fax and other high-tech gadgets have changed our lives. If you were in college 20 years ago, you would have burned many calories going back and forth to the library to do research. Today, all you have to do is sit at your computer and use a search engine website. You can literally let your fingers do the walking for you.

Lack of physical activity is one of the big reasons why people easily get fat. Unfortunately, many people have no time to do formal exercise like going to a gym or even exercise at home because of their work. Their jobs don't require them to move much. Their surroundings are not conducive to even walk around because of pollution and security risks. When they get home, they are so tired all they want to do is flop down on the couch and watch TV.

Suggested solutions

Stopping the rise in obesity is a formidable task similar to the anti-smoking campaign, according to the US Surgeon General David Satcher. He says it is going to take a concerted effort among health professionals, educators and the food industry.

Suggested solutions are a higher tax on fast food and junk food, government subsidy to make fruits and vegetables cheaper, tighter controls on food ads aimed at children, banning fast food and junk food from schools, requiring restaurant menus to state how many calories their food contains, lower insurance rates for people who exercise, requiring companies to provide exercise opportunities for their employees, etc. In short, it's going to take some drastic measures to stop the growing menace of obesity.

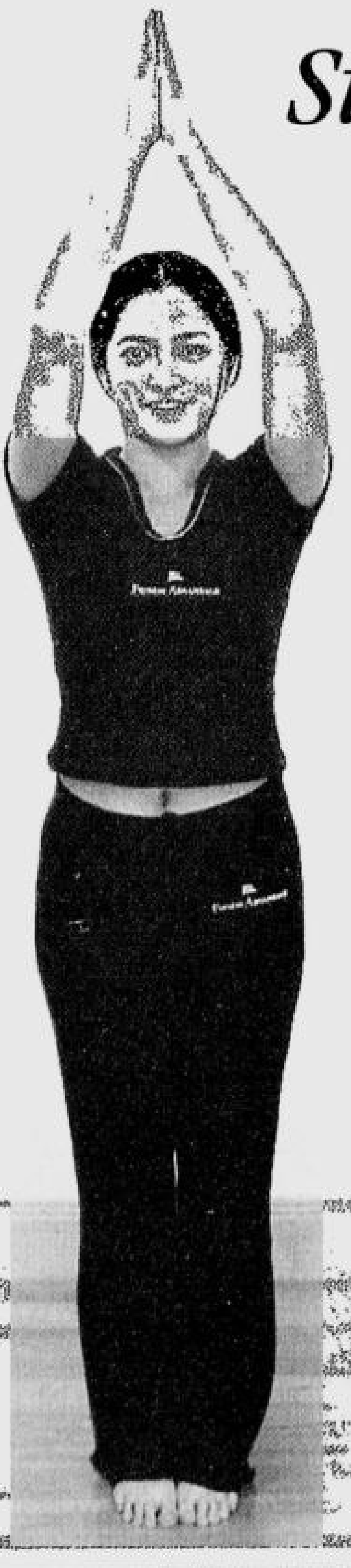
Note: The Association of Fitness Professionals of the Philippines (AFPP) will hold a fitness seminar on Feb. 22, Saturday, at the University of the Philippines, Diliman. Topics will be "Basic Gym Programming," "Capoeira," "Cardio Kung Fu," "Cardio Striptease" and "Stability Ball Training." Call or text Ivy Abuel at 850-7647 or 0917-518-1202.

Watch "In Fitness & In Health" Mondays to Fridays on Studio 23 (Channel 23) at 6-6:30 a.m. and on Net25, 6-6:30 p.m.

For questions and past articles and exercises, go to www.tinajuanfitness.com.

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Standing moon



THIS yoga-inspired exercise stretches the sides of the body.

Equipment: None

Exercise technique:

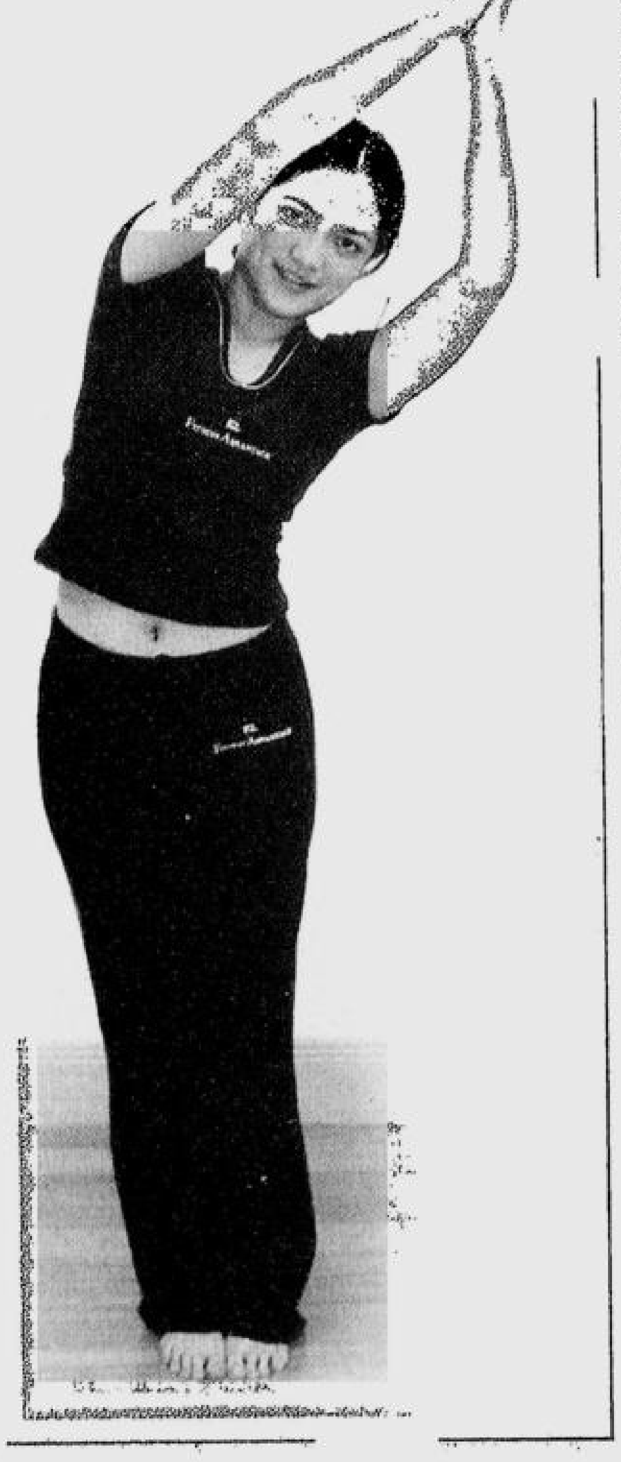
1. Stand with your feet together. Put your palms together with thumbs crossed in the middle of your chest then raise your arms overhead.
2. Elongate upward then lean your body to one side.
3. Hold for three to five breaths.
4. Return to the middle and bring your palms down to the middle of your chest. Rest your shoulders for two to three breaths then repeat the exercise on the other side.

Performance tips:

1. Make sure that your inhalation and exhalation are consistent in length and depth. One breath means inhaling and exhaling.
2. Try to elongate diagonally while you are leaning to the side instead of just allowing your upper body to fall sideways.
3. If it bothers your shoulders, separate your palms and keep your arms at shoulder width.
4. If you feel like you are unbalanced, keep your feet hip width apart.
5. If it bothers your lower back, bring only one arm up and keep the other one by your side by placing your hand on your hip.

Repetitions:

Do only one repetition per side.



Exploring creativity in therapy

FOR artists and therapists working with abused children, art has the power to heal in wonderful ways.

Believing in such power, Bantay Bata 163 initiated the Arts for Healing project. Its primary goal is to craft a long-term art education program for the healing and rehabilitation of abused children.

As part of a lecture series on child rights, an Arts for Healing lecture-workshop with international consultants is scheduled at the Philippine Children's Medical Center and Studio 1 of ABS-CBN in Quezon City on Feb. 24-25.

The lecture-workshop will feature the following speakers:

Mayu Gonzales is director of Mental Health Services of the New York Foundling Hospital and clinical assistant professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at New York Medical College.

Dr. Gonzales's lecture-workshop of Group Art Therapy Model will focus on the use of creative arts in group psychotherapy and various group art therapy models for children and adolescents in out-of-home placement.

Dr. Ashok Shah is a practicing art therapist, senior artist, concept originator of Indian Art Therapy and founder of the Indian Art Therapy Movement.

Dr. Shah's will talk about Creative Art Therapy, an art workshop designed specifically to promote creativity, expression of non-verbal language and healing through a therapeutic process utilizing visual art materials and techniques.

Christine Dion Ciona finished her Masters of Arts in Drama Therapy at Concordia University in Montreal.

Her lecture-workshop entitled "Once Upon A Time... Storytelling" explores the power of story and playspace in healing children who have been abused.

The Arts for Healing project is based on the pedagogy developed by Rudolf Steiner who believes in a holistic development of the child in consonance with the stages of Early Childhood.

Call 374-5550 or 415-6627.

Seminar on how to develop handwriting skills

SKILL Builders Therapy Center invites parents and teachers to attend a seminar that will answer these questions:

- What is the step-by-step approach to developing handwriting skills?
- Does the child's posture and motivation really affect how he writes?
- How do I deal with specific handwriting problems, such as writing too heavily, poor spacing, wrong grasp?
- Are there special considerations for left-handed children?
- Is there a correct way to transition from printed to cursive writing?

Occupational therapists Judith Ramos and Aimee Luz will demonstrate the best way of teaching handwriting on Saturday, April 26, 1-4 p.m. at The Pearl Manila.

Registration fee inclusive of hand-outs and light snack is P400. There will be no on-site registration.

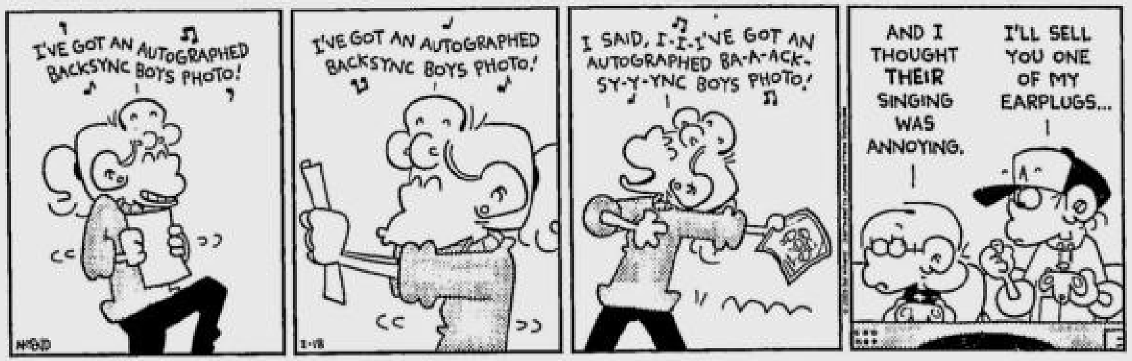
Groups of five or more are entitled to a special rate of P300 per person. Parents of Skill Builders clients pay only P250 per person.

The early bird special allows 10% discount to those who register and pay on or before April 5.

Call 536-7444 for more details.

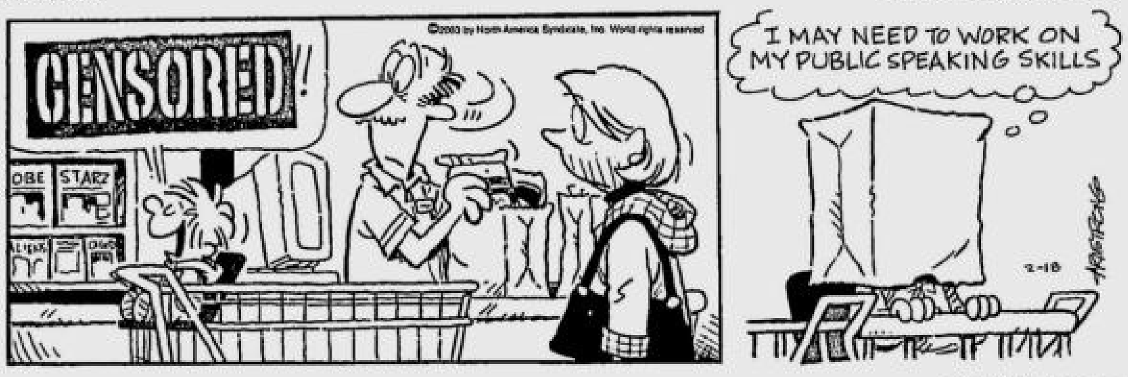
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


I'VE GOT AN AUTOGRAPHED BACKSYNC BOYS PHOTO!
I'VE GOT AN AUTOGRAPHED BACKSYNC BOYS PHOTO!
I SAID, I-I-I'VE GOT AN AUTOGRAPHED BA-A-ACK-SY-Y-YNC BOYS PHOTO!
AND I THOUGHT THEIR SINGING WAS ANNOYING.
I'LL SELL YOU ONE OF MY EARPLUGS...
2-18

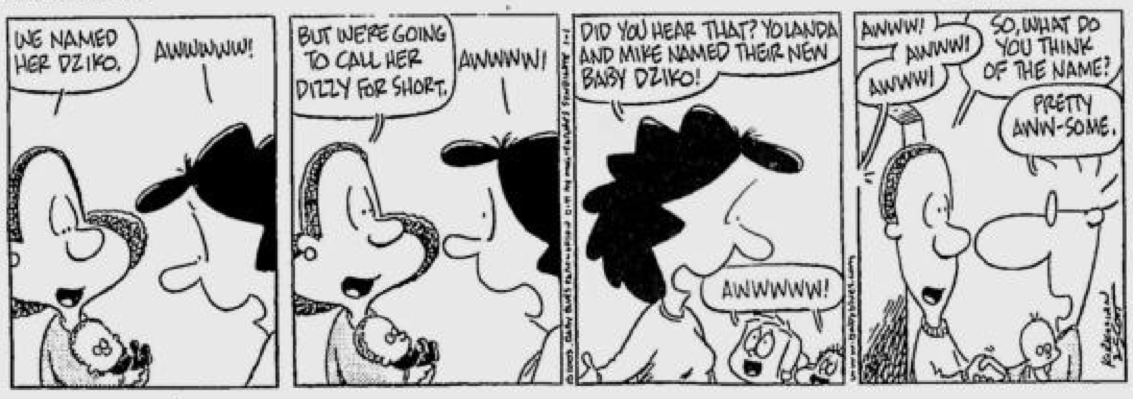
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


©2003 by North America Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved
CENSORED!
OBE
STARZ
I MAY NEED TO WORK ON MY PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS
2-18
ARMSTRONG

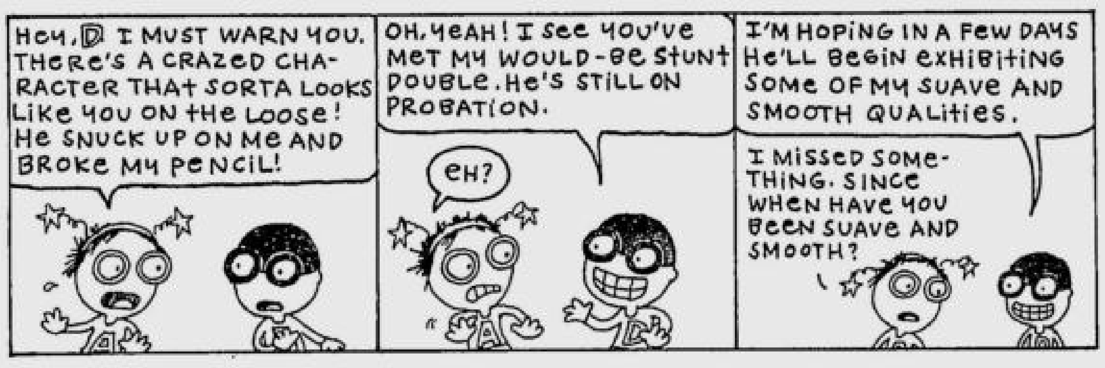
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WE NAMED HER DZIKO.
AWWWWW!
BUT WE'RE GOING TO CALL HER DIZZY FOR SHORT.
AWWWW!
DID YOU HEAR THAT? YOLANDA AND MIKE NAMED THEIR NEW BABY DZIKO!
AWWWWW!
AWWW!
AWWW!
AWWW!
SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE NAME?
PRETTY AWW-SOME.

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HEY, D, I MUST WARN YOU. THERE'S A CRAZED CHARACTER THAT SORTA LOOKS LIKE YOU ON THE LOOSE! HE SNUCK UP ON ME AND BROKE MY PENCIL!
OH, YEAH! I SEE YOU'VE MET MY WOULD-BE STUNT DOUBLE. HE'S STILL ON PROBATION.
EH?
I'M HOPING IN A FEW DAYS HE'LL BEGIN EXHIBITING SOME OF MY SUAVE AND SMOOTH QUALITIES.
I MISSED SOMETHING. SINCE WHEN HAVE YOU BEEN SUAVE AND SMOOTH?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are a daring explorer in life. Your bold imagination carries you far. You have your head in the clouds, but your feet are firmly on the ground. Many of you will travel. You can be a team player, but you function best in solo positions. The year ahead will be one of the most lucky, fortunate years of your life.
Birthdate of: Prince Andrew, British royal; Benicio Del Toro, actor; Justine Bateman, actress.

ARIES (March 21to April 19): You need more time by yourself in the next few weeks in order to do some serious navel gazing. Think about what you want to accomplish in the year ahead.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You can expect to be more popular in the next four weeks. Accept all invitations. Go ahead with plans to extend invitations to others.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Expect to be singled out for increased responsibilities or honors of some sort in the immediate future. Whatever you do, you'll easily impress bosses and VIPs.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your focus on shared possessions and joint ownership has tired you out. You want to get away. Travel, adventure and escape appeal to you now.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): In the month ahead, it's important that you clearly define your boundaries with respect to shared ownership and joint property. Explain your position to others.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Your focus on close friends and partnerships increases now. Remember that you can learn an enormous amount by watching how you react to others. How else can you practice generosity or patience?

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): The month ahead is the perfect time to clean up your act. Focus on getting yourself organized, both at home and at work. This is important because your surroundings affect you so much.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Romance, love affairs, the entertainment world and show business now beckon you. You want to have fun! Expect also to have increased involvement with children in the month ahead.

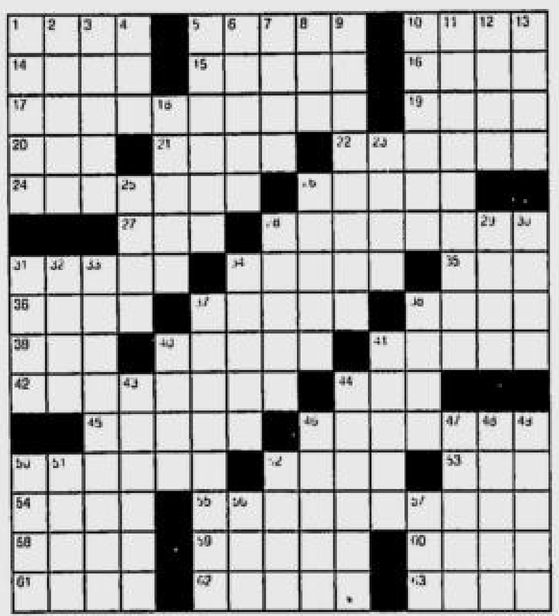
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Pour some extra energy into your domestic world now. Focus on family members and setting your house in order. This is important.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): A busy month lies ahead. Short trips, conversations, shopping, buying and selling are just some of the things that keep you on the run. Get out and hustle!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Give extra thought to your financial scene. Expect to spend more money than usual in the next few weeks. Think about how you want to earn money as well.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Happy Birthday! The Sun has entered your sign today. It is now your turn to restore, replenish and re-energize yourself for the rest of the year.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Randall J. Hartman
Escondido, CA

2/18/03

ACROSS
1 Disfigurement
5 Appeals
10 Biblical prophet
14 Person, place or thing
15 Martian neighbor
16 Bankruptcy
17 Poe poem
19 Primo condition
20 Obese
21 "Dies __"
22 Span
24 Twist off
26 Single syllable state
27 Annex
28 Orchestral composition
31 Groundwork
34 Freighter load
35 Fauna display
36 Islands off Galway
37 Outer robes
38 Saxophonist Stan
39 Stimpy's pal
40 Louganis feats
41 Gaggle makeup
42 Harried
44 Indigo or woad
45 Pass on
46 Female voice
50 Actor Omar
52 "__ Well That Ends Well"
53 Whale school
54 Concluding passage
55 Clan plan
58 __-friendly
59 "Fear of Flying" author Jong
60 "__ Misbehavin'"
61 Exploit
62 Passover feast
63 Ransom of early cars

DOWN
1 Military muddle
2 Talk-show host O'Brien
3 Bee and Em
4 Cellular letters
5 Took a look
6 Susan Dey TV series
7 Perry's creator
8 Dined
9 Contrivances
10 Weasel cousin
11 Ijsselmeer's site
12 Leader leader?
13 Poker fee
18 Flycatchers and goatsuckers
23 Puerto __
25 Actor Dean
26 Poetic dawns
28 Screamed at a scarecrow?
29 Toddlers
30 Seep
31 Hook's end
32 Length x width
33 "Gidget" star
34 Collection of quail
37 Serengeti skyscrapers?
38 Will of "The Waltons"
40 Reuben shop
41 __ Rose Lee
43 Actor Depardieu
44 Kind of diplomacy
46 Bacon unit
47 Shower month
48 Without conclusion
49 "Golden Boy" playwright
50 Gulf War missile
51 Fuel-line element
52 Surrounded by
56 Exist
57 Chinese way

Monday's Puzzle Solved

S	E	M	I	S	■	C	H	E	F	■	D	U	M	B
A	D	U	L	T	■	H	A	L	L	■	A	G	A	R
W	I	L	L	Y	N	I	L	L	Y	B	I	L	L	Y
S	E	L	F	■	A	D	O	■	I	O	N	I	A	N
■	■	■	A	B	B	E	■	G	N	A	T	■	■	■
H	I	A	T	U	S	■	C	O	G	■	Y	A	P	S
I	N	L	E	T	■	M	E	L	B	A	■	D	E	L
F	U	D	D	Y	D	U	D	D	Y	B	U	D	D	Y
I	R	E	■	L	A	S	E	S	■	O	N	E	A	L
S	E	R	G	■	Y	E	S	■	C	U	D	D	L	Y
■	■	■	E	S	T	S	■	H	A	T	E	■	■	■
S	T	I	N	K	O	■	A	I	R	■	R	A	I	L
H	A	N	D	Y	D	A	N	D	Y	R	A	N	D	Y
E	T	R	E	■	A	C	N	E	■	I	C	I	E	R
D	E	E	R	■	Y	E	A	R	■	A	T	S	E	A

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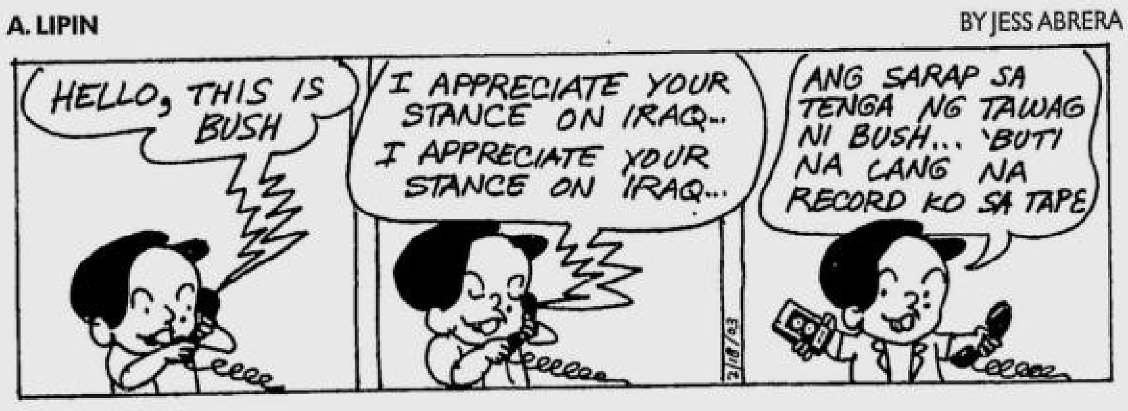
2/18/03

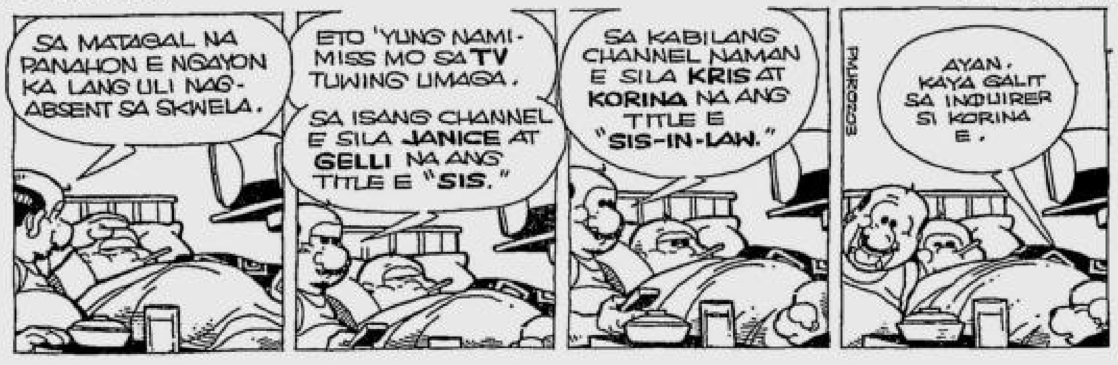
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HELLO, THIS IS BUSH
I APPRECIATE YOUR STANCE ON IRAQ.. I APPRECIATE YOUR STANCE ON IRAQ...
ANG SARAP SA TENGA NG TAWAG NI BUSH... 'BUTI NA LANG NA RECORD KO SA TAPE
2/18/03

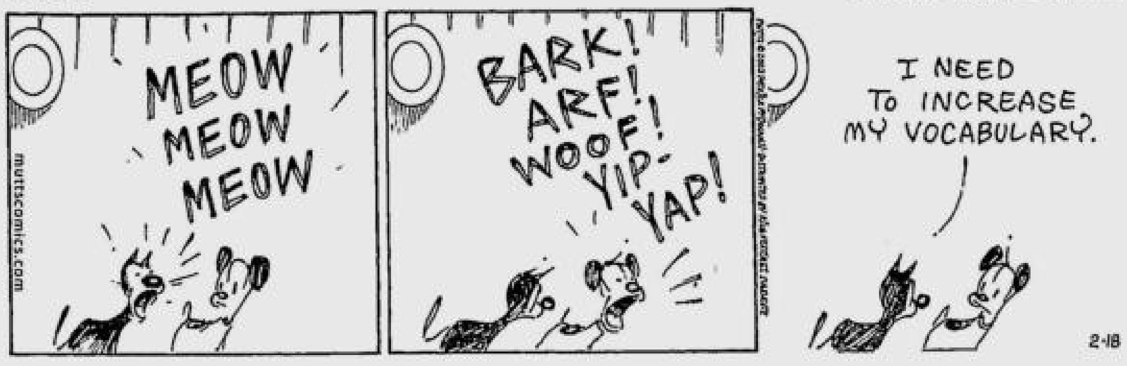
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SA MATAGAL NA PANAHON E NGAYON KA LANG ULI NAG-ABSENT SA SKWELA.
ETO 'YUNG NAMI-MISS MO SA TV TUWING UMAGA.
SA ISANG CHANNEL E SILA JANICE AT GELLI NA ANG TITLE E "SIS."
SA KABILANG CHANNEL NAMAN E SILA KRIS AT KORINA NA ANG TITLE E "SIS-IN-LAW."
AYAN. KAYA GALIT SA INQUIRER SI KORINA E.

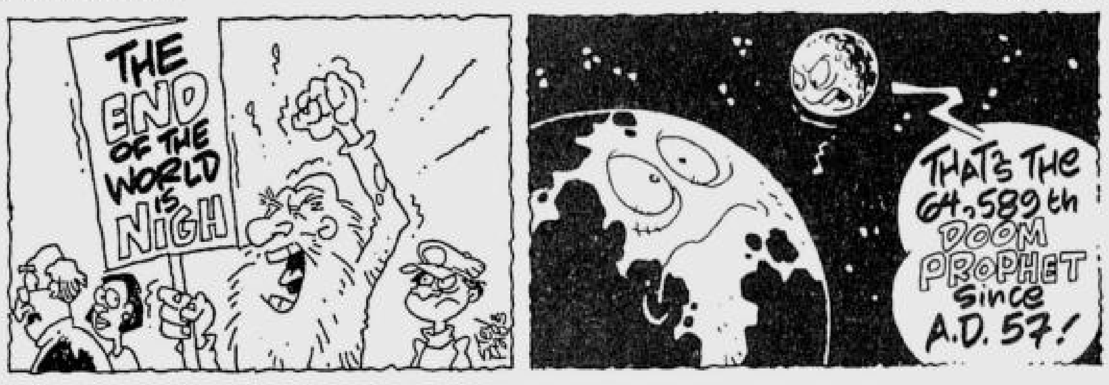
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MEOW MEOW MEOW
muttscomics.com
BARK! ARF! WOOF! YIP-YAP!
I NEED TO INCREASE MY VOCABULARY.
2-18

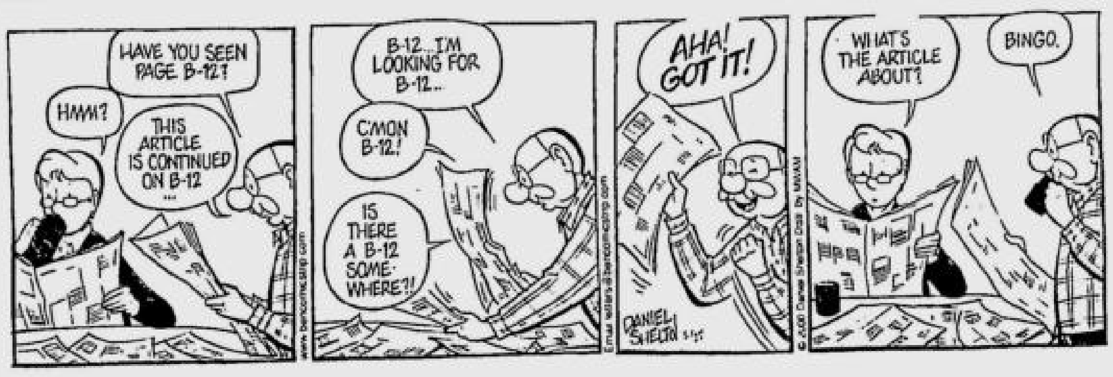
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


THE END OF THE WORLD IS NIGH
THAT'S THE 64,589th DOOM PROPHET SINCE A.D. 57!

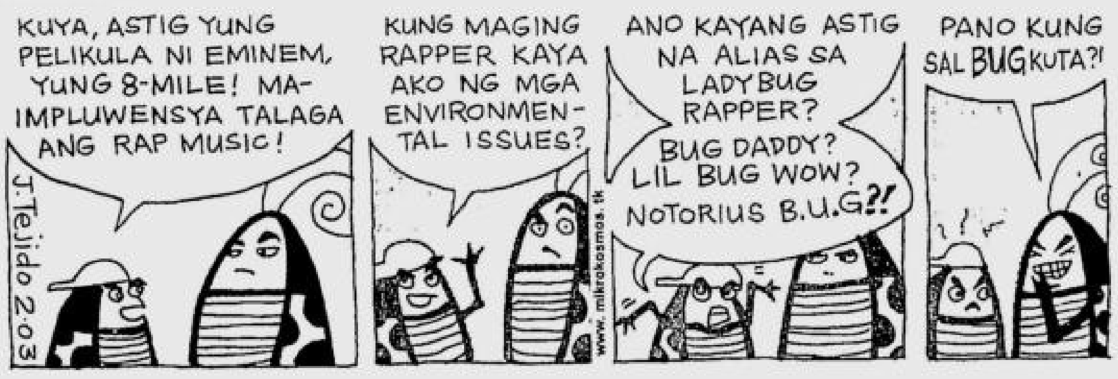
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


HAVE YOU SEEN PAGE B-12?
HMM?
THIS ARTICLE IS CONTINUED ON B-12 ...
B-12... I'M LOOKING FOR B-12...
C'MON B-12!
IS THERE A B-12 SOMEWHERE?!
AHA! GOT IT!
DANIEL SHELTON
WHAT'S THE ARTICLE ABOUT?
BINGO.

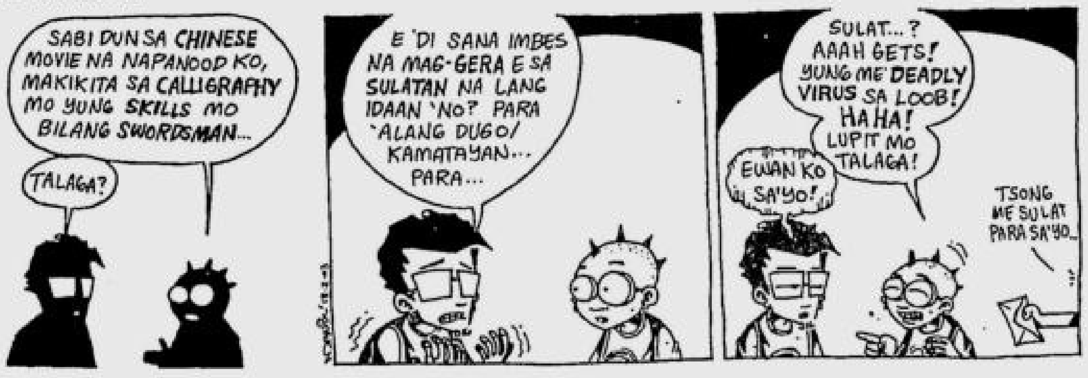
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


KUYA, ASTIG YUNG PELIKULA NI EMINEM, YUNG 8-MILE! MA-IMPLUWENSYA TALAGA ANG RAP MUSIC!
J. Tejido 2.03
KUNG MAGING RAPPER KAYA AKO NG MGA ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES?
www.mikrokosmos.tk
ANO KAYANG ASTIG NA ALIAS SA LADYBUG RAPPER?
BUG DADDY? LIL BUG WOW? NOTORIUS B.U.G?!
PANO KUNG SAL BUG KUTA?!

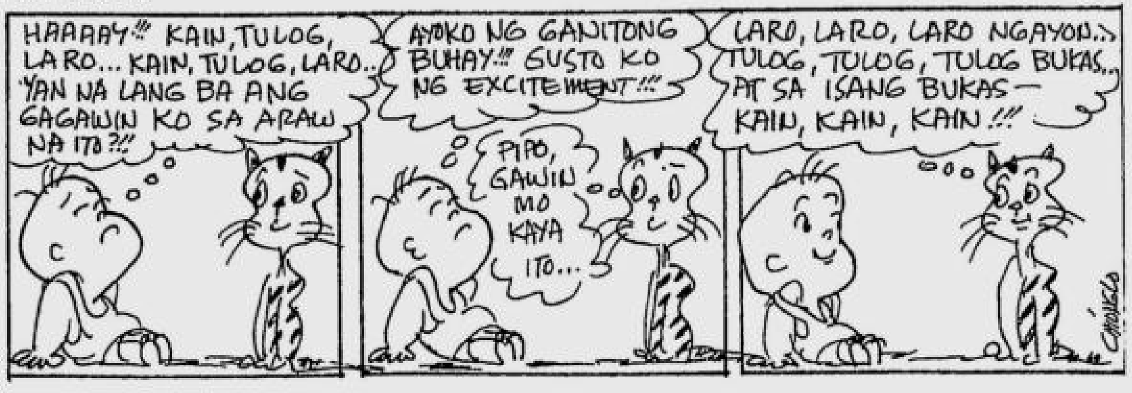
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


SABI DUN SA CHINESE MOVIE NA NAPANOOD KO, MAKIKITA SA CALLIGRAPHY MO YUNG SKILLS MO BILANG SWORDSMAN...
TALAGA?
E 'DI SANA IMBES NA MAG-GERA E SA SULATAN NA LANG IDAAN 'NO? PARA 'ALANG DUGO/ KAMATAYAN... PARA...
SULAT...? AAAH GETS! YUNG ME DEADLY VIRUS SA LOOB! HA HA! LUPIT MO TALAGA!
EWAN KO SA'YO!
TSONG ME SULAT PARA SA'YO..

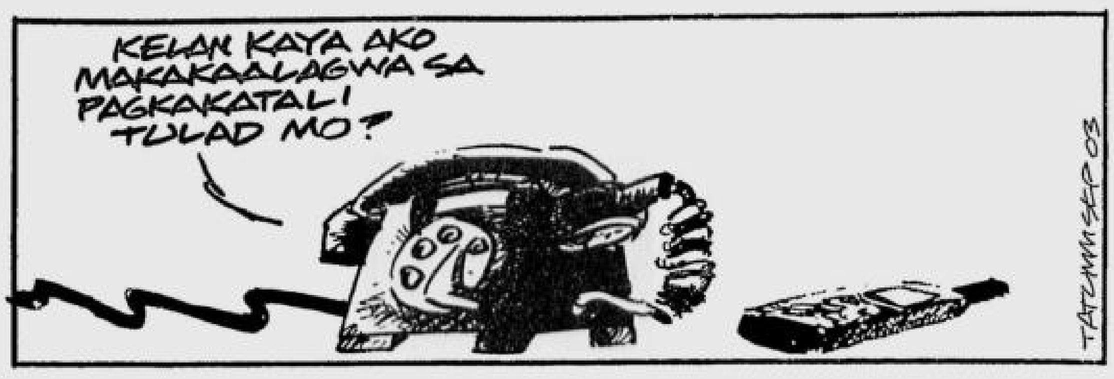
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


HAAAAY!!! KAIN, TULOG, LARO... KAIN, TULOG, LARO.. 'YAN NA LANG BA ANG GAGAWIN KO SA ARAW NA ITO?!!
AYOKO NG GANITONG BUHAY!!! GUSTO KO NG EXCITEMENT!!!
PIPO, GAWIN MO KAYA ITO...
LARO, LARO, LARO NGAYON... TULOG, TULOG, TULOG BUKAS.. AT SA ISANG BUKAS— KAIN, KAIN, KAIN!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


KELAN KAYA AKO MAKAKAALAGWA SA PAGKAKATALI TULAD MO?

Quest for women of substance

By Allison W. Lopez
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

AILEEN Araneta, Carmita Francisco, Margie Moran-Floreindo, Unilever president Howard Belton, Chiqui Server and Elena Young

SHE may be the quiet lady who does your laundry twice a week. Or your *suki* at the village wet market. And for all you know, she could even be you.

Dove, an advocate of well-being, celebrates Women's Month in March with Bukod Tanging Filipina, a nationwide search for women of substance from marginalized areas.

What makes this search unique is that it aims to discover women who have not been recognized for their work, the seemingly "ordinary" women who have done extraordinary things. It also does not discriminate, for there are no educational attainments required.

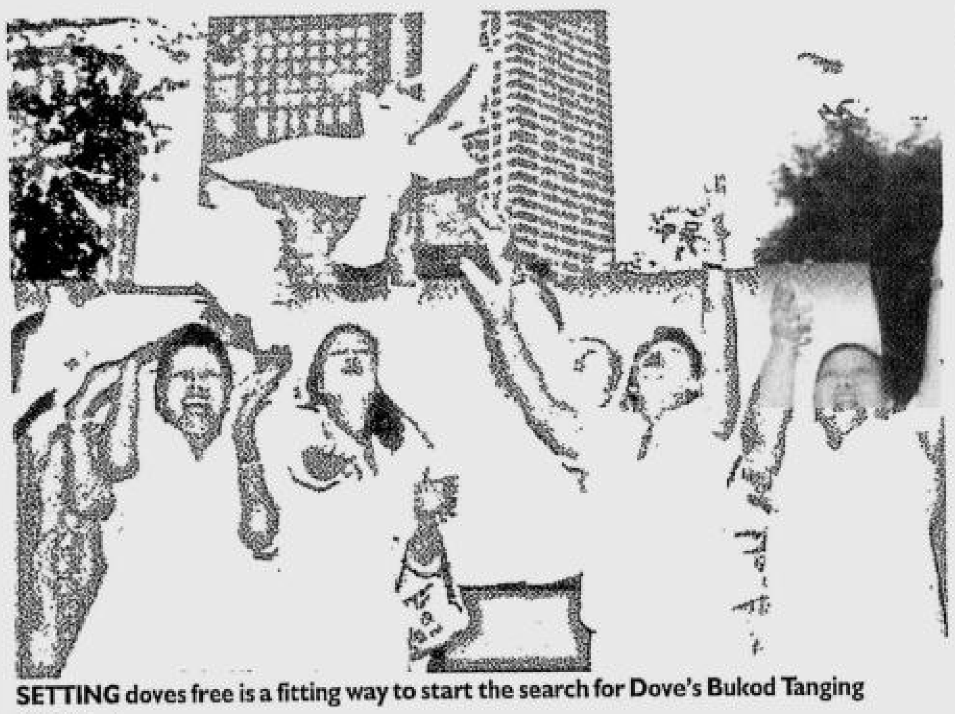
"It is our way of acknowledging the nameless, faceless women who have been instrumental in the development of their communities," said Aileen Araneta of Unilever, makers of Dove.

Bukod Tanging Filipina is part of Unilever's celebration of 75 years of providing for the needs of Filipinos through its diverse array of products. The search will be held in cooperation with Zonta, a worldwide organization of female professionals and executives aiming to advance the status of women. The Zonta Club of Muntinlupa and Environs is the central clearing house and the search engine for Luzon, under president Eugenia Server; Zonta Cebu II for the Visayas region, through Elena Young; and' the Mindanao Commission on Women for Mindanao, headed by Irene Santiago and Margie Floreindo.

Dove moment

Aside from recognition, Dove will give a much-needed break to these deserving women to illustrate the importance of the "Dove moment." According to them, the Dove moment begins each day in the bath when women indulge in their privacy, enjoy their femininity and can be in touch with their inner being.

Bukod Tanging Filipina aims to discover ordinary women who have done extraordinary things



SETTING doves free is a fitting way to start the search for Dove's Bukod Tanging Filipina.

"Dove is all about reminding a woman to take care of herself after a hard day's work," explained Araneta.

Qualifications

Women 18 years and above can join the search. A nominee must belong to a marginalized sector and can communicate well in any language/dialect. She must also be of good moral character.

She must possess leadership qualities and must have created an impact in her community through an ongoing and sustainable project. The project may be for livelihood, environment, health, peace and order or education. Lastly, she must not have any previous national or international award.

The search will only recognize individuals, not groups, although groups may nominate their own member.

Nine finalists will be selected, three from each region. Each will receive P5,000 cash, Unilever products, a trophy, pampering treatments, and a trip to Manila with hotel accommodations and meals.

Out of the nine finalists, three Bukod Tanging Filipina winners will be selected to represent each region. Each will receive P75,000 cash, Unilever products, a trophy, pampering treatments, and a trip to Manila with hotel accommodations and meals.

Deadline for submission of nominations is on March 10. The awarding ceremonies will be held on March 29.

Nomination forms are available through: Carmita Francisco, Zonta Club of Muntinlupa and Environs, Room 1808, Medical Plaza Building, Ortigas Center, Pasig City (tel. 687-0990/1281, fax 687-0989), for Luzon; Elena C. Young, Zonta Cebu II, Old Banilad Road, Cebu City (tel. 032-231-2854, fax 032-231-3945), for Visayas; Irene Santiago, Mindanao Commission on Women, 121 University Avenue, Juna Subdivision, Davao City (tel. 082-298-4032, fax 082-298-4031), for Mindanao.

MODELS Lana Asanin and Anna Shier, and young diva Roselle Nava display the two things that brides need on their wedding day: a Veloso gown and a perfect smile.

All dressed to the teeth in white

IT was an event just right for a bride. Near the Perfect Smile Professional Teeth Whitening Center in the Ayala Center of Glorietta arose a fruit and flower-laden French vineyard. The fashion and lifestyle media were there along with some guests.

Models for this blended show were actual celebrity clients of Perfect Smile, all eager to show the audience the "smile value" of fashion.

Designer Malu Veloso dressed Lana Asanin, Anna Shier, Roselle Nava and Tootsie Guevarra in her wedding and formal fashion lines, which featured some creative uses of the delicate *piña* fabric.

Celebrated in this event was the joining of forces of Perfect Smile with Letlet and Malu Veloso to create a total fashion impact called "The New White." Thanks to the tie-up, special bridal packages are now available to brides-to-be who know that a beautiful smile is the ultimate fashion accessory.

Whenever couples plan their wedding with the Velosos, they can take advantage of special discounts, and gift certificates for Perfect Smile's special Teeth Makeover Service.

Perfect Smile was celebrating, too. It was marking its first anniversary of being the pioneer of providing laser dental whitening treatments in the Philippines. The skeptics, both within the profession and the public at large, needed to be educated on the safety and effectiveness of lasers in whitening teeth. As shown by the high levels of customer satisfaction, laser whitening is the only system with no serious side effects and that treating even badly discolored teeth can be a comfortable experience.

Perfect Smile Professional Teeth Whitening Center, located on the 3/L Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati, is the salon of choice of celebrities in business, politics and entertainment.

Call 892-9398/9941 or visit www.oneperfectsmile.com.

Ampalaya helps treat diabetes

AMPALAYA is known to have healing properties especially on diabetes mellitus, a chronic disease with life-threatening complications. Aside from the fact that diabetes is a lifetime disease, it is also an "expensive" disease. Herbcare Corporation saw the big potential of ampalaya as a food supplement that can help diabetic patients who cannot afford to buy expensive medicines. Thus, Herbcare developed Charantia Ampalaya Food Supplement in teabags, loose bits, and capsule form. Not only is Charantia proven safe and effective as adjunct to balanced diet, proper exercise, and doctor-prescribed medication but affordable as well. Although it is not an alternative medicine for the treatment of diabetes, studies have shown that Charantia help lower diabetics' blood sugar and improve their total well-being. With this positive effect, doctors can lessen the intake of expensive medicine of their diabetic patients.

The Association of Municipal Health Officers of the Philippines (AMHOP), composed of doctors who run our country's municipal health centers, led by Dr. Guia G. Abad highly recommends Charantia to their diabetic patients. In fact, AMHOP even encourages non-diabetics to take Charantia as preventive medicine for diabetes. Call 802-2222.

NEW! Naphthalene in COTTON PAPER
Longer shelf life
Lessens strong naphthalene odor that stick to clothes
Safer
CROCODILE
NAPHTHALENE TABLET
Insect Repellant and Deodorizer
KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN
CROCODILE
Naphthalene Tablets
in Cotton Paper

CROCODILE Naphthalene tablets can be used on fibrous objects, leather goods, in cabinets and drawers, and behind framed pictures. Its wrapping releases the repellant smell more slowly than an uncovered ball. The tablets keep on working from two to six months on average. Crocodile Naphthalene tablets are available at all Robinsons and SM supermarkets, Landmark, Ever, Uniwide, Unimart, Cash and Carry, Home Depot, Makati Supermarket, Alabang, South Supermarket, and selected outlets of 7-11.

How to keep skin pimple-free

EVERY year, we make our list of new year's resolutions and try our best to follow them as diligently as we can. For some people, their new year's resolutions range from refraining from sweets to avoiding a bad habit/vice (e.g. smoking, drinking liquor, etc.).

But to adolescents as well as young adults, their new year's resolution may be related to their skin.

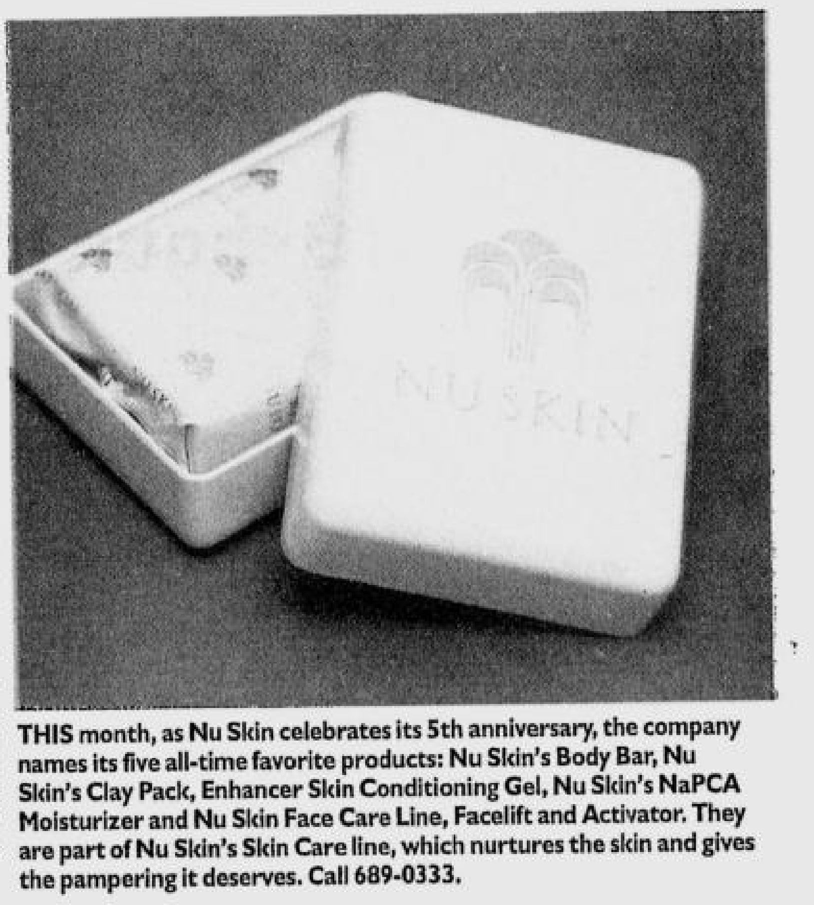
So here are simple tips to maintain healthy and beautiful skin:

1. Always tie your hair up when sleeping to prevent hair bacteria from spreading to your ruptured skin.
2. Change your pillow case as often as possible, preferably cover it with a clean towel and change it daily.
3. Wash your hair daily. Avoid shampoo from flowing down your face.
4. Avoid squeezing, fiddling and pricking acne with your fingers.
5. Avoid the sun, if possible.
6. Avoid oily food.

7. Drink plenty of water. Doctors always tell us to gulp down eight glasses a day to wash down impurities inside our bodies.
8. Have at least seven to eight hours of sleep. Staying up late at night is not good for your skin.
9. Avoid dusty places or areas where gas/fumes are likely to be present.
10. If you eventually develop pimples, it is best to consult your dermatologist.

When it comes to blackheads, whiteheads and pimples, there is a remedy that dermatologists often prescribe to keep acne at bay. Known to dermatologists and scientists worldwide, adapalene is a breakthrough anti-acne molecule found in skincare products that is proven to effectively reduce and eventually heal acne. It was discovered by French scientists in the mid-'90s and is considered one of the most effective acne treatments.

A topical retinoid, adapalene reduces redness or irritation of the skin, even those with sensitive skin. Because it is water-based, adapalene, after application, easily penetrates skin pores and goes directly to the affected skin area in seconds. Effective in treating blackheads and whiteheads which often lead to pimples, adapalene is now used for acne medication.



THIS month, as Nu Skin celebrates its 5th anniversary, the company names its five all-time favorite products: Nu Skin's Body Bar, Nu Skin's Clay Pack, Enhancer Skin Conditioning Gel, Nu Skin's NaPCA Moisturizer and Nu Skin Face Care Line, Facelift and Activator. They are part of Nu Skin's Skin Care line, which nurtures the skin and gives the pampering it deserves. Call 689-0333.

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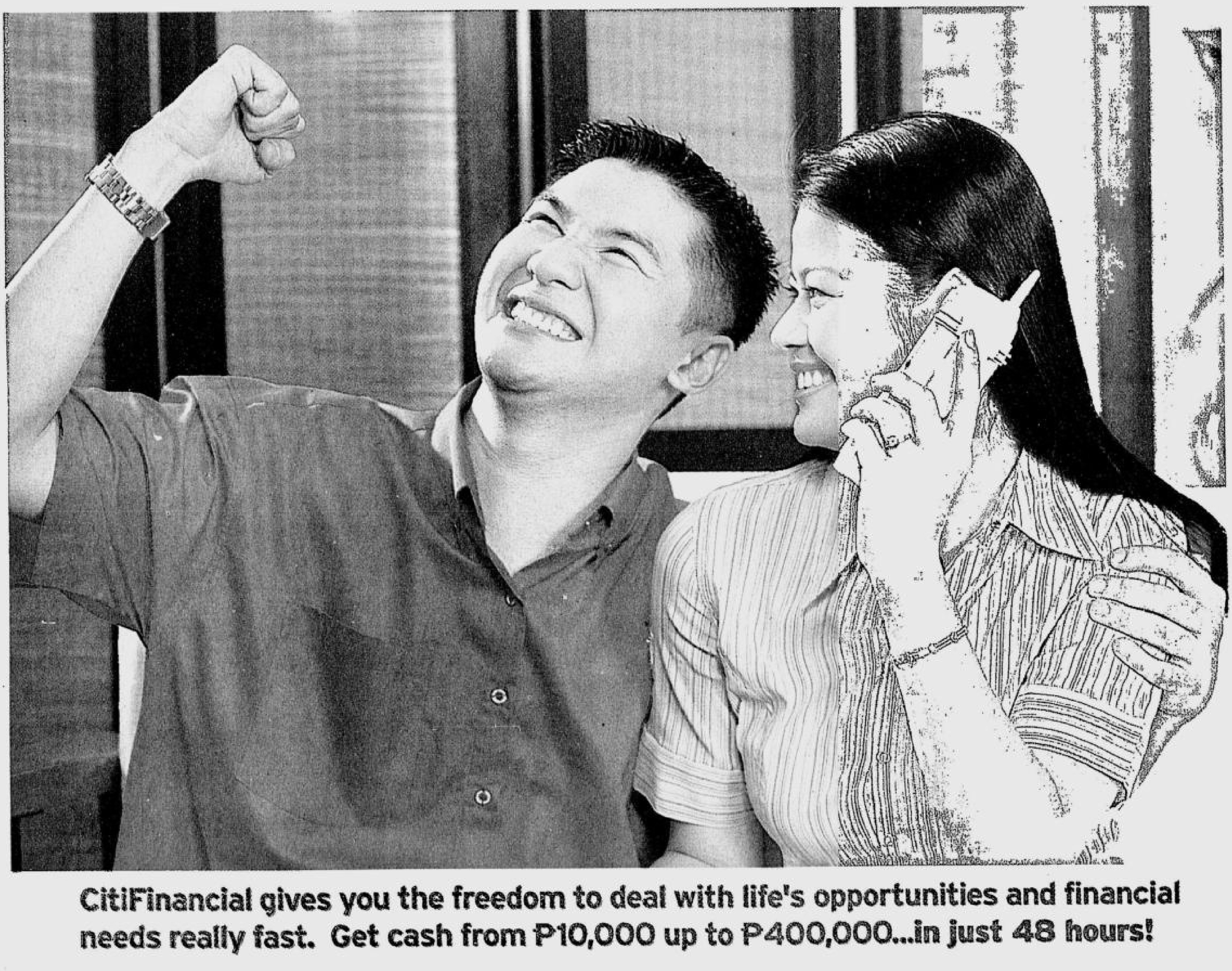

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